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THE

CAMBRIDGE MODERN HISTORY

PLANNED BY

THE LATE LORD ACTON LL.D.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF MODERN HISTORY

EDITED BY

A. W. WARD LITT.D.

G. W. PROTHERO LITT.D.

STANLEY LEATHES M.A.

VOLUME VIII

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

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PREFACE

THE main focus of activity for European forces shifts from age to age. Thus in preceding volumes, under the changing play of national collisions, and the stimulus of new ideas, we have seen its position move from Italy to the Rhineland and to Switzerland. Its limits are sometimes narrow, sometimes they embrace a wider field. But in no epoch is the centre of material and spiritual energy for Europe more definitely located, in none is the action proceeding from that centre more novel in its kind, more destructive of the old, more ambitious of the new, than in the period of the French Revolution. For this whole decade the main attention of the student of European history must centre in Paris.

The present Volume traces the intellectual genesis of the revolutionary movement among the audacious thinkers and the philanthropic listeners of the eighteenth century. It shows how the institutions and the administration of France were unfitted to resist a violent shock, while her vacillating rulers hesitated to use such resources as the constitution placed in their hands. Benevolent enthusiasm, peaceful agitation, irresolute control, are succeeded by anarchy and terrorism; society seems to be resolved into its elements, and the fortunes of the nation to depend on the caprice and idiosyncrasies of a few chance-selected men. The impulse spreads beyond the frontiers. Europe gathers her forces to resist the destructive flood. France reacts to hostile pressure; institutions are extemporised in the midst of foreign and civil war; the organic unity of the French nation reasserts itself; order succeeds to anarchy, fixed aims to vague aspirations; and wars of conquest follow wars of self-preservation. Separately is described the attempt of legislators to break loose from the bonds of custom, convention, and tradition, and to build up a new scheme of human relations from a purely rational basis. Finally, the effect of these destructive and reconstructive ideas is traced in action and reaction through the chief countries of Europe; and the foundations of our modern political and social scheme become visible. The new phase of

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European history, which opens with the Consulate, is left to be treated in another volume.

But while this main drama absorbs our main attention, and dominates one-half of the European continent, a secondary plot unfolds itself in the east. The preoccupation of the central Powers leaves room for the ambition and intrigue of Russia; and the fate of Poland is decided in accordance with Catharine's wishes. Meanwhile the jealousy of Austria and Prussia and their disputes over the Polish spoils leave to France a breathing-space; the revolutionary government has leisure to establish itself; and before Poland is finally dismembered the gravest crisis has passed. Here and there moreover we see indications of a new and imperious problem, the Eastern question, which will occupy the energies and attract the ambitions of statesmen and diplomatists for more than a century to come.

The regeneration of France, the extinction of Poland—these themes with their accessories claim all our space. From the European point of view, the domestic politics of England become of secondary interest, even to Englishmen. The European significance of British activity is in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. British internal struggles and party fortunes influence the main plot only in so far as they hamper or assist the efforts of William Pitt and Nelson. But the due consideration of British politics is only deferred; the period before 1793 will find its place in Volume VI, the period after 1793 in Volume IX; while Volume VI, which will naturally include the story of Grattan's Parliament, must also follow that movement to its close in the Act of Union.

The thanks of the Editors are due to all the contributors to this Volume for time and labour unsparingly devoted to the common task; and also to Mr. C. R. L. Fletcher, of Magdalen College, Oxford, for advice and assistance freely given, and to Professor Maitland for his careful revision of the translation of the Chapter on "French Law in the Age of the Revolution."

A. W. W.
G. W. P.
S. L.

CAMBRIDGE,
April, 1904.

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CHAPTER I

PHILOSOPHY AND THE REVOLUTION

PHILOSOPHY, wrote Mallet du Pan in his *Mercure Britannique*, may boast her reign over the country she has devastated. Her votaries, he said, hastened the degeneration and corruption of the French by weakening the bulwarks of morality, by sophisticating conscience, and by substituting the uncertain dictates of man's fallible reason, the equivocations of passion and of selfishness, for rules of duty imposed by tradition, confirmed by education, and secured by habit. They threw doubt on all truths, and shook the foundations of whatever had been established and consecrated by time, by experience, and by a wisdom saner than their own. Intellectual anarchy prepared the way for social anarchy. Rousseau, the favourite author of the middle classes, who was read and commented upon in the streets, misled virtue's self. He taught the nation to receive the dogmas of popular sovereignty and of natural equality as axioms, and deduced from them their most extreme consequences. He was the prophet of the Revolution, and his works were its Gospel.

Mounier, on the other hand, an observer not less acute and one who had himself played so important a part in the opening scenes of the Revolution, considers that the "philosophers" contributed but little to the overthrow of the old political and social order. It is true that they had attacked abuses and advocated reforms, that by their hostility to religion and by their generally materialistic doctrine they might indirectly have undermined morality and encouraged a selfish luxury and corruption; but he maintains that their wilder rhapsodies were little read or not seriously taken. Such works as Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality*, or that of Mably, *Doubts on the Natural Order of Societies*, were, he assures us, looked upon as brilliant pieces of declamation, and had as little practical influence as More's *Utopia*. Desire of civil and political liberty existed before the *Encyclopédie* was published (1751–72) or Montesquieu had written; and, if during the latter part of the century that desire became more vehement, this was far more due to an envious appreciation of English freedom and of American independence, than to the influence and teaching of the philosophers. They were not the cause

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of ruined finances, of fiscal oppression, of the vacillation, the weakness, and the incompetence of the government. The Americans had adopted and proclaimed the same principles as the French revolutionists, yet none of the evil results attributed to those principles had followed. Nor were the crimes and follies which dishonoured the Revolution so much due to the false and mischievous doctrines of theorists as to the unscrupulous ambition of rival demagogues; nay, they were perpetrated in cynical contempt of those principles which these men had constantly in their mouths. If Rousseau had never written, the doctrine of popular sovereignty would have been asserted, as it had been by the French in the sixteenth and the English in the seventeenth century. Christianity had taught as emphatically as any philosopher that men were equal; nor was that hateful maxim, by which the worst crimes have been justified, that all means are legitimate which conduce to the safety of the State, of so recent invention. Before we can decide which of these statements comes nearest to the truth, and to appreciate the part played by the French writers and philosophers of the eighteenth century in preparing the way for the Revolution and in determining the objects aimed at by the reformers, it may be well to summarise roughly the principles which influenced the men of 1789 and 1793, guided their policy, and inspired their constructive efforts. In the thousands of pamphlets which poured from the press during the year which preceded the meeting of the States General, in the Declarations of Rights, in the preambles and resolutions voted by the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies and by the Convention, in the speeches of the liberal statesmen and demagogues, we find certain general principles accepted as axiomatic, and the assumption that all conclusions which can be logically deduced from these indisputable premises require no further justification. Let us enumerate the most fundamental of these axioms.

All men are by nature equal; all have the same natural rights to strive after happiness, to self-preservation, to the free control and disposal of their persons and property, to resist oppression, to hold and to express whatever opinions they please. The people is sovereign; it cannot alienate its sovereignty; and every government not established by the free consent of the community is a usurpation. The title-deeds of man's rights, as Sieyès said, are not lost. They are preserved in his reason. Reason is infallible and omnipotent. It can discover truth and compel conviction. Rightly consulted, it will reveal to us that code of nature which should be recognised and enforced by the civil law. No civil enactment which violates natural law is valid. Nature meant man to be virtuous and happy. He is vicious and miserable, because he transgresses her laws and despises her teaching.

The essence of these doctrines is that man should reject every institution and creed which cannot approve itself to pure reason, the reason of the individual. It is true that if reason is to be thus trusted it

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must be unclouded by prejudice and superstition. These are at once the cause and the effect of the defective and mischievous social, political, and religious institutions, which have perverted man's nature, inflamed his passions, and distorted his judgment. Therefore to overthrow prejudice and superstition should be the first effort of those who would restore to man his natural rights.

Natural equality, nature and her law, which is prior and superior to all civil enactments, the Social Contract and the indefeasible sovereignty of the people — all these were conceptions familiar to jurists and publicists and even to politicians before the eighteenth century. That which is characteristic of the French authors of that period is their faith in reason, and a conviction that, since all that is amiss is due to imperfect institutions, all would speedily come right were those imperfections remedied. This delusion was encouraged by the influence of the classics, with their exaggerated faith in the power of the legislator. If Lycurgus, by imposing a few rules of life, could turn men into Spartans, it must be comparatively easy to turn Frenchmen into men. It was not yet a commonplace that we ourselves, our characters, prejudices, and habits, as well as the laws and institutions under which we live, are the result of a long process of evolution. When this truth is half recognised, as it is by Rousseau himself, who holds that the work done by Calvin in Geneva is impossible in a larger State, the conclusion drawn is that things must go on as they are, and that only partial palliatives are possible. The idea of progress, of gradual amelioration, is never suggested, except by Turgot in a prize essay; and, although Utopias are not wanting, no writer before the Revolution made any systematic attempt to forecast the probable future of society, the direction in which it would advance.

We should far exceed our limits were we to attempt to trace the history of the idea of nature, her rights, and her law, from the Sophistic antithesis of nature and convention, from the doctrine of the Stoics, popularised by Cicero and applied by the Roman lawyers, through the writings of the theologians and jurists of the Middle Ages down to the days of Grotius and Selden. But it must not be forgotten that many of what are called the principles of 1789 were recognised and used as convenient weapons against the authority of the Crown during the sixteenth century both by Catholics and Huguenots; by none more emphatically than by the priest Boucher and the Jesuit Mariana.

Men, said Boucher, are by nature free. The people choose their prince and confer upon him their sovereignty; but they who delegate their authority remain the superiors of their representative. Civil law gives the ward a remedy against an unjust guardian; the King is the guardian and patron of his people and may be deposed if he oppresses them. It is the duty of subjects to resist a prince who violates God's law, the theological equivalent for the philosopher's law of nature.

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Mariana, in his celebrated apology for tyrannicide, also asserts that the derived authority of the prince is subordinated to the popular sovereignty; for we cannot suppose that all the members of the State would voluntarily have stripped themselves of their rights and have handed themselves over unconditionally to the good-will of an individual.

Such doctrines, advanced by the apologists of intolerance and persecution, the partisans of Spain, and the enemies of national independence, were not attractive to the majority of Frenchmen. Weary of civil strife and anarchy, of political and theological controversy, disgusted by the selfish and unpatriotic intrigues of princes and nobles, the people were led by a sound instinct to rally round the monarchy, the centre and the symbol of national life. This conservatism is conspicuous in the writings of that genius who more perhaps than any other undermined in France the foundations of belief. Montaigne (1533–93) drew from his conviction, that human reason cannot attain to truth, and that every argument may be met by another equally cogent, the practical conclusion that to make reason arbiter in social and political questions must lead to anarchy, and that therefore a wise man will not by innovations weaken the force of custom and tradition, the foundation and the strength of all laws and institutions. It is better, he says, to endure a bad law than by altering it to impair the authority of habit. The evils of change, the miseries of revolution, are indisputable; the advantages of this or that form of government are debateable. Why encounter a most certain evil for the sake of a most doubtful good?

But, while Montaigne's belief that truth is unattainable led him also to deprecate any attack on the doctrines of the Church, of which he believed the effects to be wholesome, he again and again suggested a destructive criticism of those doctrines and placed the most deadly arms in the hands of others, who like Voltaire believed their effects to be evil. The "Libertines," as they were called, Epicurean free-thinkers and sceptics, avowed followers of Montaigne, one of the best known and last of whom was Saint-Évremond (1613 *c.*–1703), the friend of Ninon de l'Enclos, continued the tradition of incredulity during the seventeenth century. They held faith to be the negation of reason and that we should follow our natural impulses and instincts. Rightly consulted and understood our nature is a law to itself. But it was from Bayle (1646–1706), and not from them, that Voltaire and the other assailants of orthodoxy and tradition borrowed their most effective weapons.

There may, at first sight, appear to be but little of the spirit of the eighteenth century in Bayle's writings. Like Montaigne he rejects the authority of reason, in which alone the "philosophers" believed; and unlike Montaigne, who holds that if little better than animals we are little worse, and as prone to virtue as to vice, he maintains with Pascal that man's nature is essentially evil. Virtue is a perpetual struggle of will against natural instincts; and the history of civilisation is, according

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to him, the history of man's successful efforts to overcome and rise above his nature. As for a golden age, that, he asserts, must be sought, not prior to civil society, but prior to creation; for then, and then only, pain and sorrow, moral and physical evil, were unknown.

In politics, moreover, Bayle was a timid conservative, wholly averse from revolutionary principles. Yet his *Dictionary* was the storehouse from which the philosophers of the following generation derived their method and no small part of their ideas and their facts. The irreverent banter or ironical reverence with which the most solemn subjects are treated, the skill with which the reader is insensibly led to the conviction that he is far less certain about things than he imagined, the insidious suggestion that, although all reason is against such a creed, it is perhaps as well to believe in God, in Providence, and in immortality — if you are fool enough — all this in Bayle breathes the very spirit of "philosophism." The method of the *Encyclopédie* as described by Diderot is the method of Bayle's *Dictionary*. "Articles dealing with respectable prejudices must expound them deferentially; the edifice of clay must be shattered by referring the reader to other articles in which the opposite truths are established on sound principles. This method of enlightening the reader has an immediate influence on those who are quick of apprehension, an indirect and latent influence on all." It was from Bayle that writers, anxious not to give too sudden a shock to prejudice or to avoid consequences unpleasant to themselves, learnt the art of suggesting the most extreme conclusions from seemingly innocent premises. Yet one liberal principle was openly advocated by the cautious and conservative Bayle — that of toleration. His *Commentaire philosophique sur le Compelle Intrare* was published in 1686, three years before Locke's *Letters on toleration*. Free thought is, he argues, a natural right, since neither religious creeds nor philosophic theory admit of demonstration, but are matters of conjecture. Nor is it dangerous to allow men to exercise this right, for even an atheist is not necessarily a bad citizen. Society could exist without religion.

This brief sketch will suffice to show that one part of the philosophic doctrine of the eighteenth century, the negative and destructive part, was already in existence before the seventeenth century had ended; and we have also noticed that the positive conceptions of popular sovereignty and natural rights were familiar to the publicists of the sixteenth century. The great writers of the age of Louis XIV either concerned themselves but little with political theory, or gave their support to that ideal of government which it was the ambition of the "great monarch" to realise. Descartes in theory held that the State should resemble a town symmetrically planned on a level site; but in practice he was a conservative. Who, he asked, would wish to pull down the buildings of an ancient city in order that it might be rebuilt by square and line? Slow reforms are best; it is far easier to destroy than to construct. Pascal — a pessimist in

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politics as in all else — maintains, like Spinoza and Hobbes, that might is right; for, he adds, might is might and right is not. As justice could not be made strong, force was justified; and so peace at all events was secured. It is dangerous to let the people know that the laws are not just. "This dog is mine," said those poor children. "This is my place in the sunshine." "Such," he exclaims, "was the origin of injustice and usurpation among men." But while the sun of Louis XIV stood in the zenith these were but unheeded mutterings; and Bossuet set out with great pomp of words the theory of the absolute monarchy. The authority of Kings is sacred, absolute, indefeasible. "Ye are gods" the Scriptures declare. The sovereignty of Kings is prior to all law, which owes its validity to their enactment or assent.

The French civil wars of the sixteenth century, though the immediate issue had been religious rather than political, had led men to investigate the basis of political authority; in a still greater measure this was the result of the struggle between the Crown and the Parliament in England, where the questions disputed were mainly constitutional. The leaders of the Long Parliament, many of whom had been educated at the Inns of Court, had for the most part the distaste for appeals to first principles characteristic of English lawyers; so that, although there was a disposition among the more extreme fanatics to refer to natural rights and to the indefeasible sovereignty of the people, the opposition to the Crown was mainly based on constitutional and legal precedents. It is therefore not surprising that the first attempt to settle the controversy between King and people by logical deductions from abstract assumptions should have been made by a champion of absolutism. It was a dangerous innovation to appeal to reason for the justification of despotism. To do so was to acknowledge the authority of a tribunal whose verdict was likely to be adverse. Moreover, Hobbes (1588–1679) gave to the compact on which he based his State a singularly unreasonable form. The social pact according to him was a covenant made by every man with every man to give up their natural freedom, their natural right to everything, to the man (or body of men) whom they chose to represent them, to submit their wills to the sovereign's will, their judgment to his judgment. While the subjects were bound by this covenant the sovereign was left perfectly free, both because his people had covenanted with each other not to resist his will, and because he still retained his natural right to all things, his natural liberty to do all things. It was reasonable for men to seek to escape from Hobbes' state of nature, a state indeed of natural liberty and equality, but also of war of all against all, in which they were "solitary, brutish, vile, and miserable"; but was it reasonable that they should unconditionally surrender up themselves, their lives, and properties to the good-will of the sovereign?

But the political speculations of Hobbes, as well as his crude sensualist and utilitarian doctrine, influenced French thought not so much directly

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as through the teaching of his follower and opponent Locke (1632–1704). Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* is the chief source of the French philosophy of the eighteenth century, of the philosophy of common sense, which though condemned as shallow gave at least an intelligible answer to the most momentous questions. It may be that it dealt but superficially with problems, the solution of which it is probably the fate of humanity to be ever seeking and never to find; yet it satisfied the many, and this doctrine more profound, but neither so intelligible nor so logical, could not have done. In the works of Locke may be found nearly all the most essential principles which influenced the political and social theories of the French writers. According to him, men, born virtuous, free, and equal, originally lived in a state of nature, which was gradually corrupted by the growth of property and luxury, until, to check greater evils, civil government — an evil itself, so far as it limits natural freedom — was instituted. Man has natural rights, discoverable by right reason, which existed in the state of nature; but law, a measure by which controversies may be decided, a judge to apply that law, and force to support his decisions, were then wanting. It was to supply these and for the protection of life and property that government was instituted; the members of the State by the Social Compact surrendering their rights so far as was necessary to secure these ends, but retaining others which are to be maintained even against the sovereign. As civil government in itself is an evil, its functions should be strictly limited. Man's reason is the highest law. Before civil society is instituted, reason is the one law, the law of nature; in civil society it still is the test of the validity of all law. No law can be binding which is opposed to right reason, the foundation on which all law rests. As the *Contrat Social* of Rousseau is the outcome of Locke's *Treatises on Government*, so is the *Émile* of his *Thoughts concerning Education*; while the Englishman's *Letters on Toleration* gave a great impulse to the crusade led by Voltaire against intolerance, although he lays less stress than Voltaire and his followers on the sceptical argument against persecution: the absurdity and error, or at all events the uncertainty, of the doctrines assent to which is to be enforced.

Enough has been said to show that at the end of the seventeenth century "principles" were not wanting to which the French people might appeal should a time come when they were no longer satisfied with the existing social and political arrangements. Already there were many signs that this time was near. The ruin of the finances was complete. The condition of the rural population was wretched. The peasants indeed, as Sir William Temple had noticed in the earlier and more prosperous years of the reign of Louis XIV, were so dispirited by labour and want that their misery was no danger to the government; but Frenchmen with any patriotism or feeling could not but

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conclude with Vauban and La Bruyère, with Fénelon and Saint-Simon, that there was something amiss in institutions, under which a large part of the industrious population of the most fertile country in Europe was condemned to a life of abject suffering.

Moreover the undoubted stimulus, which had been given to manufactures and trade by the policy of Colbert, had, by increasing the wealth and importance of the middle classes, prepared them to welcome doctrines subversive of social distinctions and privileges. De Tocqueville remarks that the policy of the French monarchy had encouraged the jealousy and hostility of classes to prevent their common action. It certainly had aggravated that rancorous envy of the privileges of birth and station which is one of the less amiable features of the French character. "My motto," said Camille Desmoulins, "is that of every honourable man — no superior." This is the spirit which many of the most acute contemporary observers, men so different as Montlosier, Rivarol, and Roederer, held to be one of the chief causes of the Revolution.

Although Louis XIV played out his part on the public stage not without dignity amid calamities which would have overwhelmed a weaker character, the eyes of his subjects during his later years were no longer blinded to the shortcomings of the government by his glory and by the splendour of his Court. The pharisaical decency imposed upon the courtiers did not excuse in the eyes of the majority of the devout — Jansenists or sympathisers with the Jansenists — subservience to Jesuit intolerance; while the cruel persecution of the Protestants disgusted believers whose humanity was stronger than their religious passions, and still more so the free-thinkers, a growing class among the educated. "Every young man," wrote the Duchess of Orleans in 1679, "either is or affects to be an atheist." There was a general sense of oppression, a vague desire for reforms and for greater freedom, and a growing impatience of a savagely intolerant, narrow, and, as it seemed, hypocritical orthodoxy.

Almost everything that was done or left undone by the government of the Regent Orleans tended to strengthen these feelings. The Parliament had under Louis XIV been strictly confined to its judicial functions. The first public act of the Regent was to invite the magistrates, tacitly assumed to be the representatives of the sovereign people, to determine how the country should be governed during the King's minority. Henceforth up to the very end of the monarchy the lawyers set themselves to oppose administrative reforms as the champions of the people, and, no longer refusing "to unveil the august secrets and mystery of sovereignty," claimed to be "as it were a compendium of the Three Estates," thus keeping alive the idea of popular sovereignty. Reverence for the Crown was impaired by the cynical profligacy of the Regent and by the elevation to the highest place in Church and State of his favourite

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Dubois, the most unscrupulous knave ever raised from mean estate by brilliant talents and the basest arts.

The failure of Law's scheme still further degraded and discredited the government. The King, as a French historian remarks, or at least the King's representatives, had turned bankers, and had proved unsuccessful and fraudulent bankers. Moreover the Mississippi Bubble had brought the nobility and the moneyed classes into closer contact. Many of the greater nobles had used their prudently realised profits to satisfy their creditors; others who had not speculated in the Rue Quincampoix took advantage of the depreciated paper currency to pay off their mortgages. But such material advantages were purchased by the aristocracy at the price of diminished self-respect and public consideration. Sordid care for gain had not hitherto been one of the vices of the French nobles. Honest trade was still scorned; but henceforth men of the highest rank did not hesitate to stain their scutcheons by marrying the daughters of financiers, and to repair their waste by sharing in the questionable but lucrative speculations of their fathers-in-law, whom they flattered and humiliated. Throwing away their pride, these nobles, perhaps for that very reason, wrapped themselves more closely in their vanity. The uneasy familiarity, to which the rich financier and his children were admitted by "people of quality," made the impassable barrier by which they were separated more palpable and more invidious. The rich *parvenu* knew that he was richer, and close intercourse convinced him that he was not less cultivated, intelligent, and refined, than these descendants of the Crusaders. It is significant that the wealthy publicans and stockjobbers were the most eager patrons of the philosophers, the most ready to welcome, or, like Helvétius, to disseminate, their most subversive doctrines. The idea of equality, to which, says Senac de Meilhan, the people were at first indifferent, was cherished by the rich.

Meantime the Jansenist controversy, and the fierce and indecent conflict between the Molinist hierarchy and the Gallican *Parlement* over the Bull *Unigenitus*, dealt a deadly blow to religion. Nothing, except perhaps the extravagances of the Jansenist enthusiasts, was more likely to encourage incredulity than the arguments by which the Molinists sought to discredit the well-attested miracles of the deacon Paris. The diarist Barbier, a typical *bourgeois* of education, remarks that what was now seen taught men what to think of the miracles and marvels of former times; and so, no doubt, many reasoned. The Bull *Unigenitus*, wrote the Marquis d'Argenson, and not the philosophy imported from England, is the cause of the present hatred of the priesthood.

Many Frenchmen had visited England during the reign of Charles II when the intercourse between the two courts had been close. French reviews began to notice English works about 1717; not a few English books had been translated; and almost all the subjects touched upon by Voltaire in his *Letters on the English* had been dealt with before his

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return to France in 1729, but without attracting attention. Locke's *Essay* had been translated in 1700, but few copies were sold till 1725. Circumstances had not as yet suggested that any practical lesson could be learnt by France from her northern neighbours; and "the immediate force of speculative literature depends on practical opportuneness." Nor was it till much later that the thought of transplanting any part of the English Constitution was seriously entertained. Just as it was the experimental and rationalistic method of the English writers, rather than their actual doctrines, which so greatly influenced French thought in the eighteenth century, so it was the comparison of the general spirit which inspired the administration in the two countries, and of the results of government in them, which encouraged the discontent of the French with their own institutions, rather than any wish directly to imitate a nation very generally regarded as "seditious and violent, brutal in temperament, and always in extremes."

The publication of Voltaire's *Letters on the English* (1734) may be taken as marking the point when the active campaign of the "philosophers" against the existing order of State, Church, and society began in France. The assault on the Church from the first was direct and uncompromising; that on the State was indirect, and often scarcely intentional on the part even of those by whom it was most advanced. It is significant that Voltaire's book should begin with a description of the Quakers, which enables the writer to attack indirectly every observance of sacerdotalism, every tenet of dogmatic Christianity. When he passes on to the other sects he loses no opportunity of sneering at the orthodox faith and commending toleration. He lays stress on the absence of a privileged nobility and on the respect shown to trade, but he deals shortly with the Constitution and government. Not less characteristic is it that he does not mention the political speculations of Locke, only noticing his refutation of innate ideas and of Cartesian spiritualism.

The polemical activity of Voltaire (1694–1778) continued for nearly half a century; but the whole plan of his campaign and the objects to which it was directed are indicated in this book of some 150 short pages. His life henceforth was a constant warfare against superstition, identified with Christianity, which he believed to be the source of all intolerance and misery, and against those "unreasonable" scientific and metaphysical theories, which were capable of being pressed into the services of orthodoxy, or which were obstacles to the supremacy of common sense.

We are not concerned with Voltaire as a critic of literature or historian or metaphysician; but we may notice that in every department of human knowledge — and there was hardly any into which he did not enter — he showed himself the same philistine of transcendant cleverness. He expresses the views and arguments of the average educated man in the most felicitous language, with the most marvellous lucidity, and with the most brilliant wit. But while the average man has been

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taught to distrust his own judgment, Voltaire is fully persuaded, and with good reason, of his own cleverness and sterling common sense. What he cannot understand must therefore he concludes be nonsense; and what does not please him must be bad. He therefore loudly proclaims opinions which the ordinary man holds, but hesitates to acknowledge even to himself. Socrates was either madman or knave; Aristotle is unintelligible; Plato a dotard. All systems of philosophy are perfectly futile; and metaphysicians do not understand their own foolish business. When in his *Dictionary* he sums up under *Philosophie* the grains of common sense he has been able to gather from the writings of philosophers, a reader with no taste for metaphysics is likely to recognise an admirable summary of his own conclusions.

His canon of historical criticism is that what appears absurd to him is incredible. He has all the prejudices of the average man who relies on his common sense, and of an unimaginative student of natural science who believes only in generalisations derived from observation and in logical deductions from such premises. Hence he was entirely wanting in originality; and it has been truly said that there were Voltairians before Voltaire wrote. His influence was so great because he forcibly enunciated ideas which were held half unconsciously or timidly by his readers. All the crowd, in the well-known story, saw that the Emperor was naked; but it was only after the child put into words what all had seen that the general conviction had any practical result. Clearly to formulate and to assert prevalent opinions was in itself to threaten the existence of institutions which were out of harmony with them. The force of habit, dislike of change, self-interest, induce men to admit a strange inconsistency between their real beliefs and their social arrangements. Nor is it easy to startle them out of their sluggish acquiescence. To have done this was Voltaire's great achievement.

Like many others of the middle class who have gained wealth and consideration, Voltaire was conservative from fear of the future, not from reverence for the past. He was far from believing that his persistent attacks on the Church would shake the monarchy. But the strangest of his delusions was the conviction that all dogma could be swept away, yet a residuum of belief retained sufficient to supply a necessary sanction for the morality of the uneducated. Since he held the lower classes to be barbarians, incapable of culture and inaccessible to reason, it would have been logical to refrain from any interference with their faith. And at times he writes as if this had been his wish. He remarks, for instance, that when an old superstition is well established a wise statesman will use it as a bit, which the people have voluntarily taken into their mouths. But it does not seem that he would have extended this forbearance to Roman Catholicism, which he believed to be the most mischievous of creeds. It was chiefly the intolerance of the Roman Church, an intolerance which appears to be the logical consequence of

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her doctrine, that made him her irreconcilable enemy. To celibacy and monasticism moreover he had a rooted aversion. They were unnatural and unreasonable, and founded on that ascetic contempt of the body with which he and his contemporaries had so little sympathy. He attributed the prosperity of England to the riddance that had been effected of priests, eremites, and friars "with all their trumpery," and believed that "the voice of reason now supreme" would applaud such a reform in France. He thought that it could be carried out, not only without producing any civil discord, but even without serious disturbance of the popular faith. In this he anticipated, even if he was not responsible for, the delusion of the Constituent Assembly.

Writing in 1750, he says that the privileges of the Church will crumble away like an old ruin whenever it may please the Prince to touch them. The King had only to say a word and the Pope would have no more authority in France than in Prussia. Herein he was only expressing opinions very generally held. D'Argenson said that the Revolution would begin with an attack upon the priests, who would be torn to pieces in the streets. Barbier notes that all Paris is filled with passionate hatred of the Molinist hierarchy, and that this anti-Roman party is swelled by all honest folk who detest persecution and injustice. Voltaire's diatribes against Catholicism and Christianity continued to be virulent, even after his fear of the consequences of the atheistic teaching of his more advanced friends, and perhaps an honest conviction, had led him to undertake the defence of natural religion. Men at all times and places had believed in the existence of a Supreme Being; and the belief, he declared, was reasonable.

Nor did his common sense allow him to believe that a time was at hand when mankind would be the docile subjects of logic and reason. The human race generally was not in his opinion two degrees nearer to civilisation than the savages of Kamtschatka. In most countries he thought the multitude of brute beasts called "men" outnumbered those who think by at least 100 to 1. Yet a popular government is, he says, less iniquitous than despotism; unfortunately it is only possible in a small and favourably situated country. It will no doubt commit errors of policy and be divided by factions; but we shall not see in it Sicilian Vespers, St Bartholomews, Irish massacres, men burnt by the Inquisition, or sent to the galleys for drawing a pail of water from the sea. In another place he maintains that a Republican constitution is the best, because under it the nearest approach is made to natural equality — by which he means an equal right to personal liberty, to property, and to the protection of the laws. The English cry for liberty and property is, according to him, the cry of nature.

He comes nearest to radical doctrine in the *Idées Républicaines* published in 1765. He there defines the ideal function of civil government as "the execution by one or more of the General Will in accord-

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ance with laws voted by all." The English, he says, are to be envied, because among them every citizen has recovered those natural rights, which the subjects of other monarchies have lost. These are the right of each individual to the unimpeded control of his actions and property, the right of addressing his fellow-citizens through the press, of being tried on all criminal charges in accordance with strict law before a jury of independent men, and of professing without molestation whatever religion he pleases. He considers that there is no reason why the French should not enjoy these rights under the existing monarchy. Voltaire had no political and hardly any social reforms greatly at heart. But he was impatient of what was unreasonable; he was humane and good-natured; and therefore wished the people, "*vile canaille*" though they were, to be happy and contented. He was rich and therefore anxious to secure order and stability. The reforms he desired were those which would naturally suggest themselves to such a man. Even as regards religion, all that he asked for the present was: that all creeds should be tolerated and civil rights extended to the Protestants, and even to the Jews — a miserable and contemptible race; that no ecclesiastical law should have any force unless sanctioned by the State; that the government should fix what feasts should be observed, and regulate the marriage laws; that there should be no privilege of clergy; and that excommunication, annates, and other payments to Rome should be forbidden.

He attacked torture with indignant common sense. Was the man who might be innocent to endure suffering much more terrible than the punishment which he would incur if guilty? He eagerly advocated a reform of the criminal laws, such as was demanded by Beccaria. The innocent children of a felon ought not to be punished by the confiscation of his property, nor a servant girl put to death for stealing half-a-dozen napkins. Criminal procedure ought not to be secret and a pitfall for the innocent. There ought not to be twenty different systems of law in the same kingdom. All laws ought to be clear and intelligible. All citizens should be equal in the eyes of the law, and all fiscal privileges ought to be abolished; a vexatious system of internal taxes and tolls should not prevent commodities from being sent to the place where they were needed. Such are the most important reforms asked for by Voltaire. They are all demanded again and again in the *cahiers* of 1789, and were effected by the Constituent Assembly.

Voltaire hated theorists and "*idéologues*," and appealed throughout to common sense and utility rather than to general principles and *à priori* conceptions. Living when he did, it was impossible that he should not sometimes speak of "nature" and "natural laws"; yet even then he never loses touch with reality. He denies that the savage is the "natural man." Primitive man was the dirtiest and most miserable of brutes, wholly absorbed in the struggle for existence. To live freely among equals is true life. Our lives are more in accordance with nature than that of the

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savage, who transgresses her law from morning to night, being useless to himself and to others. For we are naturally social beings; consequently the law of our nature is to do what is conducive to social happiness. Like almost every writer of the eighteenth century Voltaire believed the people to be what institutions and rulers make them; but he did not share the prevailing delusion that the removal of all mischievous institutions and restrictions would restore them to a state of primitive virtue and happiness. He could not indeed allow that man is naturally evil — for that was the Christian doctrine. But as things are, he believes the populace to be everywhere the same, stupid and cruel, and that at bottom none are more cruel than his own countrymen, the mildness and docility of whose disposition it was then the fashion to extol.

There is little that can be called original in the many volumes of Voltaire; but he rarely says anything that is not eminently rational, lucid, and convincing; and he says the same thing over and over again, never fearing to repeat himself, never striving after originality, but determined to be heard, and charming his reader by his brilliant lucidity, by his wit, and by sparing him every intellectual effort, even the strain of careful attention. He was the leader of the attack on the Church, on superstition, intolerance, and injustice, the most brilliant and persuasive assertor of the authority of reason; but he did nothing that others also were not attempting, that left undone by him they might not have accomplished. His work was negative. He cleared away the obstacles which dammed back the rapidly rising flood, but his hand was only the most active and unerring of many engaged in the same task; and even unassisted the impatient stream would have overflowed and borne away the impediments to its course.

The sufferings of the last years of Louis XIV's reign had called the attention of many to the faults of his rule, and had led them to desire a change in the spirit and method of government. Some of these reformers had been among the friends of the Duke of Burgundy, and had trusted that the accession of the pupil of Fénelon would enable them to realise their hopes. They were for the most part nobles who regretted an idealised feudalism. Their views therefore had little influence on the future, yet one author who belonged to this party must be mentioned. This is the Comte de Boulainvilliers (1658–1722), who, in two works posthumously published, a *History of the Ancient Government of France* and *Letters on the Parlement*, maintained the Feudal System to be the masterpiece of the human intellect. Everything gained by the authority of the Crown, every franchise obtained by the commons, was according to him a usurpation, an infraction of the rights based on conquest of the nobility, the heirs of the conquering Franks. This theory was accepted in part by Montesquieu, and by the *Parlement* when defending in 1776 the privileges of the nobles against Turgot, and was turned against

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the feudal classes with fatal effect by their revolutionary enemies. If the people were the conquered Gauls, why should they, when might was on their side, endure the oppression of men who boasted themselves to be their alien conquerors?

But even under Louis XIV there were reformers who looked to the future rather than to the past. Among them may perhaps be counted the illustrious name of Vauban. In his *Dîme Royale* he insists on the misery of the people. One-tenth of the industrious population, the real strength of the State, were, he says, destitute, and this shortly after the Peace of Ryswick, before the most disastrous years of the reign. A complete reform of the fiscal system was, he said, as just as it was necessary; for there was a "natural" obligation on all citizens to contribute to the support of the government in proportion to their ability; and every privilege exempting from this obligation was alike unjust and contrary to the common interest. During the Regency and under the administration of Fleury political questions were discussed with a freedom that had been impossible in the previous reign. A spirit of reform was abroad. In 1724 some men who shared the growing interest in social and political questions agreed to meet every week for the purpose of reading essays and holding discussions in the rooms of a certain Abbé Alary. They called themselves the *Club de l'Entresol* from the place of their meeting. We may suppose the English name of "Club," now first used in France, to have been suggested by Bolingbroke, who was one of the score or so of diplomatists, officials, and men of letters, who were members of this society. The leading spirit of the *Entresol*, at all events the most prolific contributor of essays and harangues, was the Abbé de Saint-Pierre (1658–1743). The Club was suppressed by Fleury in 1731; but the members must have had a remarkable incapacity for being bored, a most vigorous interest in the subjects discussed, or it would not so long have survived the lucubrations of so pitiless a pedant, so indefatigable a reformer, as the excellent Abbé. He had projects for everything, from securing a perpetual peace by the establishment of a European diet to the "utilisation of dukes and peers." There were among his ideas some which were sound, and some which afterwards made their way in the world. In two points more especially the Abbé de Saint-Pierre foreshadowed or contributed to the beliefs of the next generation. He had faith in the perfectibility of mankind. The race is as yet, he said, in its childhood. Like La Bruyère he considers our experience of some 7000 or 8000 years superficial and incomplete. "How old do you call yourself?" asked Fontenelle. "About 10" was the answer. And secondly his religion was a deism, more like that of Rousseau than that of Voltaire; for, although he would wish a priest to be something between a policeman and a relieving officer, he seems to have been by no means devoid of real, albeit sentimental, religious feeling; and his description of Agaton, a very

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wise and saintly Archbishop, is a curious analogue to that of the Savoyard vicar.

Another member of the *Entresol* was the better known Marquis d'Argenson (1694–1757), Intendant of Hainault, and for a short time (1744–7) Minister of Foreign Affairs. D'Argenson was fully convinced that the time was out of joint, and not less that he was born to set it right. His constantly disappointed hope to be invited to do so made him a bitter critic of the government. His memoirs afford abundant citations to historians who wish to paint the maladministration of the old monarchy and the misery of its subjects in the darkest colours; but, positive as he is in assertion, his views vary from day to day with his spirits, and these greatly depend on a chance word from the King. The grumbles of a pessimist, who is also a disappointed office-seeker, are not always very trustworthy evidence. D'Argenson's political views and programme are contained in his *Considerations on the Government of France*, a work published in 1764 after his death, but written many years earlier to refute the reactionary and feudal Boulainvilliers. He is strongly in favour of decentralisation. To govern well it is necessary to govern less. An order of the Council should not be required to repair a bad road, or a hole in a church wall. The government should be content to leave something undone; a physician does not undertake to digest for his patients. He would have the country divided into districts, boroughs, and municipalities, the administration of which should be entrusted to officials appointed by the Intendants from lists of candidates elected by the communes. The Provincial Estates should be composed of representatives of the districts and a few great landowners, sitting in one Chamber. He would abolish all internal tolls and duties, and inclines to permit free trade with foreign countries. Those who cultivate the land should be relieved from all feudal dues and obligations. If people would lay aside their prejudices they must allow that it is most conducive to the good of the State that all men should be equal. Nobles are but drones in the hive. He thinks it no objection to his principles that they are favourable to democracy and tend to the destruction of the nobility. But he has no wish to limit the authority of the Crown. The powers of the Roman tribunes, of the English Parliament, of the States General, the right of remonstrance claimed by the French law Courts, are mischievous; for the sovereign power whether in a monarchy or a republic should be one and unquestioned, like that of the Almighty. "The whole art of government consists in nothing else than the perfect imitation of God" — no doubt an easy art, at all events one in which d'Argenson imagined himself to be well versed. At the same time he would have the Prince remember that he exists for the people, and that they are not his chattels. D'Argenson thought Morelly's *Code de la Nature*, which we shall have to notice hereafter as one of the earliest sources of modern Socialism, "the book of books," and far superior to

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Montesquieu's great work. He has himself been justly called a socialistic rather than a liberal royalist; but the Duc de Richelieu's description of him as "the Secretary of State of Plato's Republic" is scarcely just, for it is clear that, had he obtained the coveted place of Prime Minister, he would have attempted reforms not very unlike those afterwards undertaken by Turgot, and in a spirit even more uncompromising. His ideal for France was a reforming despotism based on local self-government, with equal laws and equal opportunities for all. To a certain extent he anticipated the doctrines of the Economists. So early as 1739 he thought a treaty admitting English manufactures would be good for France, since it would divert French capital and labour from manufactures to agriculture — a more truly productive employment. Some years later he hears that the English have taken off import duties. He wonders whether they have fully recognised the profit they may derive from making their island the world's market. It is a mistake for a government to try to direct production. Liberty, Liberty, he exclaims, this is what is wanted for individuals and communities.

Montesquieu (1689–1755) printed his *Persian Letters* in 1721. The popularity of this book, one of the most remarkable of the century, was great and immediate. It breathes the spirit of the reaction, then at its height, against the monarchy of Louis XIV; and, written thirteen years before Voltaire's *Letters on the English*, it anticipates his attack on intolerance and orthodoxy. As a satire of society it is weak, for the characters described are lifeless types; and a modern reader is disgusted by a frigid and elaborate indecency, very characteristic of that period and far more repulsive than the spontaneous obscenity of Aristophanes or Rabelais. But when the writer turns to religious and political matters there is no want of outspoken vigour. The Pope is an old idol, worshipped from habit, yet still a potent magician, since he can make men believe that three are one, and that the bread they eat, the wine they drink, are neither bread nor wine. Nor had the state of affairs so completely changed in France that her rulers could read with complacency such an attack as that contained in the *Persian Letters* on the memory of the late King. It is true that the Regent could not be reproached with a minister of eighteen and a mistress of eighty years, nor with banishing his most useful and industrious subjects. But it was not Louis XIV alone who rewarded the man who handed him a napkin more liberally than the captain who had won a battle, and gave a small pension to an officer who had run away for two leagues, but a rich government to him who had run four. Nor was the preceding reign the only one in which pensions had been so lavishly granted as to make it appear that Princes, in consideration of the merits of their courtiers, had decided to enact that every labourer should henceforth diminish his children's daily bread by one-fifth.

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Few readers in these days probably lay down *The Spirit of the Laws*, the great work with which the name of Montesquieu is generally associated, without a feeling of disappointment, and of wonder that a book which is less a book than the materials for one should have obtained so vast a reputation not in France alone, but throughout Europe and especially in England. It was natural indeed that Burke should have exerted his unequalled command of hyperbole to extol the foreigner who had so well appreciated the merits of the British Constitution; but Horace Walpole and Gibbon are scarcely less emphatic in their commendation. Walpole probably was very ready to appreciate the merits of the wit and man of quality, who, like himself, affected to regret a vulgar impulse to join the scribbling herd; while the historian of the *Decline and Fall* was likely to be a kindly critic of a writer who at least had pointed out the way to the field in which he was himself to win renown. But we must remember that it is in part because the success of Montesquieu has been so great that it is now difficult to do him full justice. Much that he said for the first time has become trite. The ideas that he suggested have been developed and elaborated, so that as presented by him they appear crude and incomplete. It is not the least of his merits that he attempts to apply a historical and inductive method to political and social questions; but to this we are now accustomed, and we are most struck by the faults in the application of that method. Much in short that was then original now seems commonplace, and errors then scarcely to be avoided are in our eyes inexcusable.

But we may not stop to attempt a criticism or analysis of *The Spirit of the Laws*. It is sufficient for our purpose to set forth the leading ideas which Montesquieu wished to impress on his readers. He begins by asserting a general proposition, that the constitution most in conformity with nature — nature as understood by jurists and Stoics — is that which is best suited to the character of the nation for which it is intended. There is no absolutely best form of government. If law generally is the reason of mankind, the civil and political laws of each nation should be the application of that reason to particular cases. The laws should correspond to the character and principles of the established government, and like it must depend upon and suit the climate and physical conditions of the country. But it is not the illustration and practical application of this general principle that Montesquieu has most at heart. He believes that the salvation of France depends upon the possibility of undoing the evil work of Richelieu and Louis XIV, and of a return to the old monarchy, as he conceives it to have existed under Henry IV or Louis XII. The danger which threatens France is despotism, leading to anarchy. He would warn his countrymen, renew and invigorate their love of liberty. He is a liberal conservative, who would temper monarchy by aristocratic

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institutions, the antithesis of d'Argenson, one of the first advocates of democratic and socialistic despotism. Monarchies perish when obedience becomes servile, when honour — the sense of personal dignity and love of privilege — is no more, when the nobles are the despised instruments of the Prince, when the dishonourable and the base are honoured; when the monarch, abolishing all institutions and bodies intermediate between himself and his people, seeks to centralise all government in himself; when, in short, a kingdom is in the condition of France under Louis XV. Montesquieu is convinced that all undivided sovereignty is bad — whether in the hands of the one or of the many; it leads to despotism, and despotism to anarchy.

The best form of government accordingly is a carefully balanced constitution such as that of England; but this, he allows, can only be brought into being and continue to exist by some most fortunate combination of circumstances. The next best polity is a monarchy in which the power of the Prince is limited by love of privilege among the nobles and by the existence of intermediate bodies which will be an obstacle to arbitrary action and will guide the obedience of the subjects. He is disposed to approve of everything which creates friction and so impedes the direct action of the Sovereign; even the law's delays are in so far salutary. The first aim of tyrants is, he says, to simplify the laws, because they recognise in their forms an obstacle to despotism. This desire to limit the power of the Sovereign distinguishes Montesquieu from almost all the political theorists of his age. The philosophers generally had no objection to enlightened despotism, still less had the Economists; whilst it was the aim of the followers of Rousseau to free the sovereign people from all checks and trammels.

Montesquieu thought that the supreme merit of the British Constitution, the security that undivided sovereignty should not become despotism, lay in the performance of the executive, legislative, and judicial functions by special bodies — the King's ministers, the legislature, and the law Courts: a misconception sufficiently plausible to be accepted by Blackstone and other English authorities as well as by the able men who framed the Constitution of the United States. He suggested that the evils under which France was suffering might be remedied by doing that which Burke reproached the Constituent Assembly for having left undone. He would have had "privileges which, though discontinued, were not lost to memory" restored, and those opposed and conflicting interests which "interpose a salutary check on all precipitate resolutions" so organised as to limit the arbitrary power of the government. In short, he wished the constitution of the old monarchy "which had suffered waste and dilapidation" to be rebuilt and enlarged on the same plan. That this or something like this should be attempted was the wish of some of the more enlightened nobles, and, as would appear from the pamphlets and *cahiers* of 1788 and 1789, of some of the more

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conservative commoners at the time of the meeting of the Estates. But there were few even among the moderate reformers who would have been content to stop just at this point. Encouraged probably by the successful constitution-building of the United States, the liberal royalists, a majority at one time in the Constituent Assembly, hoped to realise in France the constitution described by Montesquieu as ideally best — that of England, freed from some of its anomalies and imperfections. They were disappointed; yet, had we sufficient space, it would be easy to show that, although Sieyès prevailed, traces of Montesquieu's influence are not wanting in the Constitution of 1791.

But the more extreme reformers might ask: was it clear that Montesquieu believed constitutional monarchy to be the ideally best form of government? Had he not said that the establishment of a democratic republic in England had been prevented by want of virtue? And was not that constitution obviously the best of which the principle was virtue, and which could only continue to exist so long as education and law maintained virtue, public spirit, and disinterested patriotism, checked luxury and promoted equality among its citizens? But if a republic was the best constitution, why should it not be established in France? They had learnt from other teachers that, so soon as corrupting institutions were destroyed, the native virtue of man would assert itself. All that was needed therefore was to destroy everything that existed, to pass the laws which, according to Montesquieu, are of the essence of a republic and thus secure its existence. Unfortunately Montesquieu, who had derived his ideas of democracy from classical antiquity, had written that a republic can hardly be established without magistrates invested with an awful authority, and laws which will forcibly lead back the State to freedom: that the law of public safety must prevail over every other consideration — the most execrable maxim of tyranny, as Rousseau called it: and even that, "as in old days the statues of the gods were sometimes hidden, it may at times be necessary to throw a veil over liberty." The whole spirit of the Jacobin Revolution, it has been said, is contained in a sentence spoken by Robespierre: "If the strength of a Republican government in time of peace is virtue, in the time of Revolution it is both virtue and fear — for fear without virtue is deadly, virtue powerless without fear." When Robespierre said this he may have seemed to himself and others to have been closely following the precepts of Montesquieu.

Montesquieu, like every other reformer, wishes for a complete reform of the fiscal system; but, unlike the "Economists," he would lighten the direct and increase the indirect taxation. He would have direct taxation progressive. The absolute necessaries of life should be exempt from all burdens. The comforts of life should be lightly taxed, mere luxuries heavily. The State should teach its members to work, and supply the opportunity of working. Its duty is to see that no citizen is without

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"an assured subsistence, daily bread, decent clothes, and a kind of life not destructive of health"—a most momentous admission.

The Spirit of the Laws appeared in 1748; in 1753 Chesterfield, visiting France, recognised "all the symptoms which he had ever met with in history previous to great changes and revolutions in government—" a celebrated prophecy, which would be a more convincing proof of the writer's sagacity, had he not three years later foretold even more positively the imminent ruin of his own country. But no doubt in the middle of the eighteenth century the French had begun to reason more freely than ever before upon matters of religion and government. Contempt and hatred of the clergy, discontent with the government, were more and more openly proclaimed. Incredulity was no longer confined to the upper classes. D'Argenson, especially after he had lost office in 1747, predicted more and more persistently some great convulsion, which might even end in the establishment of a Republic. Observers less pessimistic than this political Cassandra were alarmed at the prevalent spirit of restlessness and discontent. This feverish disquiet preceded and was the cause, not the effect, of the numerous books on economical and political theory and practice, criticising existing institutions and suggesting more perfect social arrangements, which were produced during the next twenty years by writers differing in their views, but unanimous in ascribing the misery of the people to the organisation of society. Whatever they see amiss, the exclamation that arises to their lips is that ingeminated by Arthur Young, "Government, all is Government." The Economists, in their own eyes the most conservative of reformers, are wanting, as Tocqueville says, in all respect for anything that exists or that is likely to be an obstacle to the realisation of their ideal. Their books, he maintains, are instinct with the spirit of democratic revolution. It is not only that they hate certain privileges; variety itself is odious to them, and they would welcome uniformity and equality even in servitude.

According to Rabaut Saint-Étienne the Economists first taught the French to reflect on the science of government; but Dupont of Nemours, himself one of them, with more justice considers that Montesquieu gave the impulse to the political and economical speculation of which the physiocratic school itself was a result. Not a little also of the public interest in such matters must be ascribed to the influence of a book, *L'Ami des Hommes*, published in 1756 by the Marquis de Mirabeau (1715–89), afterwards the most enthusiastic follower of Quesnay (1694–1774), but at that time, as he says, "no more an Economist than his cat." Such economic principles as his work contains he had taken from a manuscript in his possession written by Cantillon, an Anglo-French banker, part of which, *On the Nature of Trade*, was published in 1755. Yet there is much in Mirabeau's book that is in harmony with the teaching of the

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Physiocrats; and its great popularity prepared the way for the diffusion of their doctrines. A contemporary critic said that the author "thought like Montesquieu and wrote like Montaigne." Like Quesnay the Marquis was a Utopian optimist, firmly persuaded that he possessed the secret of so organising society as to secure to men the happiness for which nature intended them. He was convinced that agriculture was the source of all wealth; he was opposed to all restrictions on trade and industry, and so thorough-going a free trader that he held a war of tariffs to be not less destructive than a war of cannon. Both as a partisan of agriculture and as a noble he was opposed to the "moneyed interest." "Great fortunes in a State are like pike in a pond." The man who lives on an income derived from funded property is a self-indulgent drone, and the cause of most of the evils in society. The lower classes are, he says, the most truly productive, and should therefore be honoured. He tells us that he would always make way for a water-carrier with a feeling of respect; yet his hatred of the bureaucratic government is almost as much due to his indignation that men of no birth should lord it over the country gentlemen as to a dislike of centralisation, which had led him six years before to write a tract in favour of local self-government.

Struck no doubt by the similarity of their views and anxious to gain a proselyte whose reputation with the public would be useful to the cause, Quesnay asked Mirabeau to visit him, told him that Cantillon was an ass, initiated him into the true economic doctrine, and gained a devoted disciple. Quesnay, the "Confucius of Europe," as his followers called him, was the physician of Madame de Pompadour; and it was in his lodgings under her apartments that his meeting with the Marquis took place, from which the existence of the Physiocrats, as an organised and actively proselytising sect, may be dated (July, 1757). No doubt Quesnay had already thought out his system; and many of his opinions were shared by his friend Gournay (1712–59), a member of the *Bureau du Commerce* and a student and translator of the English economists, who had induced his official superior Trudaine to accept the maxim, "*Laisser faire et laisser passer*," which he is said to have been the first to formulate as the true principle of practical political economy.

Before his alliance with Mirabeau, Quesnay had only written articles in the *Encyclopédie*; one (*Fermier*), in which he ascribed the poverty of the cultivators and the decay of industry to the misery and oppression which drove the peasants into the towns, to the arbitrary and unjust taxation, and to the restrictions on the corn trade; and another (*Grains*), in which he pointed out that the natural advantages of France ought to be turned to account by concentrating labour and capital on the land, the produce of which should be exchanged for foreign luxuries, a reversal of Colbert's policy. In 1758 his *Tableau Économique* was printed at Versailles at the royal press, and it is said under the King's personal supervision, for Louis XV had as warm a regard as his selfish insensibility

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allowed for the vivacious monkey-like little man with the face, according to his admirers, of Socrates. It is not likely that the King suspected any danger to his government from that enigmatical table, or took the trouble to listen to the explanations of his "thinker," as he called the author. Two years later the *Economic Table* was reprinted, with elucidations scarcely less obscure, by the Marquis de Mirabeau, together with essays by the same hand, one of which pointed out the evils of the *corvée*. Henceforth the restless Marquis became the leader of a band of disciples who preached with eager conviction the doctrine of the net product and of the *impôt unique*. Next to the "Friend of Humanity," the most able and popular of the "Economists" as they called themselves — the name of Physiocrats was given long after by T. B. Say — were Mercier de la Rivière (1720–94), an official and at one time governor of Martinique, whose book, *The Natural and Essential Order of Political Societies*, published in 1767, contains the clearest and most connected account of the doctrine of the school; and Dupont of Nemours (1739–1817), who wrote a book in 1763 entitled *Reflexions on the Riches of the Nation*, and served the cause with an indefatigable pen in the *Journal de l'Agriculture et du Commerce* (1763–66) and in the *Éphémérides des Citoyens* (1766–72).

The Marquis de Mirabeau was of opinion that the three great inventions "which have given stability to political society" are writing, money, and the *Tableau Économique*. Fortunately it is possible to give a sketch sufficient for our purpose of the doctrine of Quesnay, without attempting to explain this most crabbed document, the main object of which is to show that the national capital can only be increased by returning a greater share of the "net produce" of the country to "productive expenditure," *i.e.*, to the support of agriculture, and that one tax upon the net returns of the land ought to be substituted for the existing complicated, unjust, and extravagant fiscal system. Rulers and subjects alike must obey the self-evident laws of nature. These "natural laws," which mankind ought to observe, are the expression of the conditions under which man, in the social state "natural" to him, will secure the maximum of well-being. The system might equally well have been christened "theocratic," since it is represented as a recognition of and obedience to the laws of nature, which are also those of God — the Physiocrats were convinced deists. These laws are an infallible guide. We can deduce from them the whole science of human life. God intends the good of man, whose universal motive is desire of happiness; and these are the rules on the observance of which it is "evident" that his happiness depends. Once understood they must command the assent of all men as infallibly as mathematical truth; so that all restriction of individual freedom is both unnecessary and injurious, and the function of government is reduced to a minimum. Indeed government would appear unnecessary, were it not that some education is needed to enable men to recognise the

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cogency of nature's laws, and were it not that in every society there are some brutes not under the control of reason. The province of government should therefore be confined to that of policeman to coerce these brutes, and of schoolmaster to render their number as small as possible. The establishment of a uniform, national, and compulsory system of education was one of the practical reforms most insisted upon by the Economists.

We are not concerned with Quesnay's erroneous idea, that labour and capital can only produce new wealth, or value, when employed on the land, nor with his curious theory that all taxation ultimately falls upon the owners of the soil; but there can be little doubt that the notion of substituting one single direct tax, levied on all landowners alike, for the existing cumbrous and unjust system of taxation, was singularly attractive, and led many to profess themselves the admirers of doctrines they only half understood. The criticism by the economists of existing institutions fostered the prevailing discontent; and change was made to appear easy by their optimistic confidence that reform was not difficult, that little more was needed than to destroy mischievous restrictions on natural liberty, and to formulate clearly the natural and necessary laws of society.

"The more I ponder over the abuses of society," wrote the Marquis de Mirabeau, "and the remedies suggested, the more convinced I am, that it needs only that twelve principles expressed in twelve lines should be firmly fixed in the head of the Prince or of his minister and carried out in detail, to set everything right, and to renew the age of Solomon." The Economists did no service to their country in thus encouraging the belief that it was as easy to build as to pull down, and that men in general were reasonable. In some ways like Rousseau, they represent the reaction against the logical development of the "philosophism" of their century. The Friend of Humanity boasts that that "odious philosophism" was never allowed to penetrate into their periodicals. Mercier de la Rivière insists that the study of the natural order of society leads man back to God, and enables him to recognise more and more His wisdom and beneficence exemplified in the laws He has given to mankind. "Helvétius," said Turgot, "seems to be constantly labouring to prove that it is not to our interest to be honourable men." The Physiocrats maintained that enlightened self-interest teaches us that not honesty only but "virtue" is the best policy. Not a few men either in the service of the government or closely connected with it more or less accepted the creed of the sect, among others Gournay, Trudaine de Montigny, Malesherbes, Bertin, the Cardinal de Boisgelin, and Turgot. Quesnay himself had the ear of the King and the support of Madame de Pompadour. The teaching of the Economists had therefore a direct influence on the measures of the central government and carried still further the reaction against Colbertism, which had led Machault, the

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one able Finance minister under Louis XV, to reply, when he was told that trade and manufactures were perishing, "so much the better, there will be the more labour to employ on the land." Yet more did it influence the spirit of the provincial administration; for Turgot, although his reforms in the Limousin were the most systematic, the most successful, and the best known, was not the only reforming Intendant.

The restrictions on the corn trade were abrogated in 1764. Unfortunately bad harvests in three successive years brought free trade and economic theory into disrepute; for dear food was a more effective argument than the ridicule of Voltaire, or Galiani's most lively and acute criticisms in his *Dialogues on the Corn Trade* (1769). The corn taxes were accordingly reimposed by Terray in 1770, to be again removed by Turgot on his accession to power in 1774. Once more the seasons took the side of protection; and the unavoidable rise in the price of food was utilised to the utmost by the enemies of the minister to decry his policy — by no one with more reckless appeals to popular passion and prejudice than by Necker, in his book on *The Corn Laws and the Corn Trade*, a production hailed by Diderot as a work of genius. When Turgot was driven from office (1776), free trade in corn was abandoned, together with those other reforms which were in strict accordance with the principles of the Economists: the abolition of the *corvée*, and of the close companies and trading corporations, the organisation of local self-government by representative councils of landowners, and the attempt to mitigate the iniquities of the oppressive fiscal system; reforms which Turgot had assured the King would, if completed by a national system of education, make the French in a few years a new people and the first in Europe. Talents, virtue and disinterestedness, honour and zeal, would take the place of corruption, timidity, intrigue, and greed. Such words in the mouth of a man like Turgot are a remarkable instance of the prevalence of that blind confidence in the perfectibility of the people, provided a few reforms are carried out, which proved so dangerous a delusion.

The more advanced philosophers had no sympathy with the Physiocrats. But Voltaire, whose dislike of everything pedantic and obscure led him to ridicule Quesnay's abstruse dogmatism, had eagerly welcomed the ministry of the greatest and the most practical of the school. There may have been some affectation in the emotion he showed when he met Turgot during his triumphal visit to Paris in 1778; but the words he wrote on hearing of the great minister's fall ring true: "I have nothing but death to look forward to, since M. Turgot is out of office. The thunderbolt has blasted my brain and my heart."

It ceased to be fashionable among those who would be thought enlightened to profess the principles of the Economists; yet the impulse given by them continued to some extent to influence the administration. More favour was shown to agriculture. Enclosures were encouraged, to

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the detriment of the poorer cultivators; and the English negotiators of Pitt's commercial treaty were surprised by the wish of the French Foreign Office to promote free trade between the two countries. "The most liberal system was what they desired." Even in 1789 not a few of the *cahiers* ask for the "*impôt unique*," the single tax on landed revenue.

It has been often remarked that before the middle of the eighteenth century the attack of the philosophers was directed against the Church, while from that time down to the outbreak of the Revolution political and social arrangements were chiefly criticised. This is not to be accepted without some explanation. We have seen that from the beginning of the century onward there was among the enlightened a very real interest in political questions and a desire for practical reforms, and that those who say that the Church alone was assailed are thinking too exclusively of Voltaire. But while the earlier generation, men like d'Argenson and Montesquieu, would have been content to build on the old foundations, Rousseau and his followers, as well as the Socialists, such as Morelly and Mably, aspired to construct the State of the future on a wholly ideal basis, and more or less believed themselves to be sketching a Utopia. The philosophers in the narrow sense — the men of the *Encyclopédie* as they are sometimes called — men such as Diderot, d'Alembert, Helvétius, or Holbach, had hardly any positive political creed. Their teaching was destructive and negative. What they did was to substitute reason for the seemingly intuitive dictates of conscience; reason, which at the critical moment is likely to become the advocate of passion and selfishness, if the premises of these men are accepted, that the end of all our actions is our own private happiness, and that they are good or bad only so far as they do or do not conduce to that end. To "return to nature" meant with them to throw off all moral restraint; as if, Rousseau pointed out, our conscience was not as much a part of our nature as our senses.

The practical outcome of their doctrines can nowhere be more clearly traced than in the purple patches with which Diderot embellished and enlivened the Abbé Raynal's otherwise meritorious and tedious *Philosophical and Political History of the Indies* (published 1774). We are told in these diatribes that the unhappiness of civilised man is caused by the absurd laws which constantly violate those of nature; that the groans of the oppressed are stifled in a prison or on the scaffold; and that if anyone should attempt to vindicate the Rights of Man he would perish in infamy. The sole employment of Princes, when not engaged in unjust wars, is to forge heavier chains for their wretched subjects and to make their slavery more grievous. Everywhere the peaceful citizen is the prey of the lawyer, the publican, and the brutal soldier. In the country the labourer is the victim of a pitiless landlord, who robs him of the hay on which his weary limbs seek a few hours'

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respite. If he owns a few acres the lord of the manor is there waiting to reap where he has not sown; if he has oxen or horses they are taken for the *corvée*; when nothing but his person remains, he is torn from his family to serve in the militia. In the towns the workpeople are exploited by idle and avaricious employers. As for religion, it is the invention of hypocritical and infidel priests, who have made the idea of a supreme being destructive of all morality. How much wiser are the Japanese Shintos! They teach the people that "the innocent pleasures of man are pleasing to the Deity"; and girls are attached to the temples to be a source of honest profit by "piously yielding to the most sacred impulse of nature." Such is the kind of writing that Raynal thought might be indulged in with a light heart. It is well known how bitterly he repented when he discovered that this was not quite the case.

Voltaire had too much sense to be the slave of logic. He refused to accept the extreme consequences of his own principles. He lamented and refuted the atheistic doctrines of his friends. But, for all that, he and they were of the same sect, a sect of which the doctrine was negative, and the practical aim of which was destruction. Some wished to destroy a little more, others a little less, but all rather for the convenience of freer movement in more liberal space, than from any wish to find room for a new construction. Not so the men of whom we have next to speak.

Man cannot live on reason alone; and no tyranny is more certain to provoke revolt than that of logic. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78) in asserting the claims of sentiment did but give expression to a widely felt feeling. D'Argenson, in the previous generation, lamented that that fine quality sensibility would soon be lost. Love and the need of loving were disappearing from earth. But afterwards he recognises in himself Pamela as well as Cato; a mixture of Richardson and Plutarch, the very formula of Rousseauism. Painters and poets, exclaimed Diderot, all who have either taste or feeling, read Richardson day and night. The Marquis de Mirabeau would like to make Grandison his model, and says that we should carefully cultivate feeling. When Diderot, meeting Grimm after a fortnight's separation, wept on his waistcoat and sobbed out at intervals during dinner, "My friend! my dear friend!" or when the Duc de Nivernais on his way to London visited the tomb of the Black Prince, and remembering his virtues burst into tears, they were but following a fashion already prevalent before the gospel of emotion, the *Nouvelle Éloïse*, was printed. Rousseau insisted, almost in the spirit of Montaigne or Pascal, on the fallibility of our intellect, the deceitfulness of our senses. But, he concludes, if reason crushes and abases man, an inner sentiment exalts him; we hear a voice which forbids us to despise ourselves. Writing in 1766 Horace Walpole says, "You must not conclude the people of quality atheists, at least not the men.

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Happily for them poor souls, they are not capable of going so far into thinking. They assent to a great deal because it is the fashion, and because they don't know how to contradict." If it is an explanation of the popularity of Voltaire that he said what most were thinking, then we may say that Rousseau was popular because he gave the most perfect expression to what others were feeling.

Another cause of his influence was his real sympathy with the people. One of the first questions a political theorist must decide is whether he would have society framed so as to secure the highest culture, the noblest activity for the few, disregarding the many, or whether, sacrificing the ideal life of the few, he should try to raise the many to a decent standard of culture and physical well-being. The former was the choice of Voltaire, the guest and correspondent of princes, the moneyed man fond of luxurious leisure, the devotee of art, as he understood it, and of literature. It could not be the choice of Rousseau. He belonged himself to the people, he had mixed with them during his happier and earlier years, and had sympathized with their joys and sufferings. He had met among them with that kindness which he was perversely determined not to recognise when shown to him by the cultured and wealthy. Purity, justice, humanity, are according to him only to be found in cottages. His political ideal was a government for the people by the people. The *Émile* has been called a paedagogical romance; it shows how a boy of the upper classes may be so trained as to share in popular virtue, but for that reason the education is essentially popular and capable of wide application. Joseph Chénier was not altogether wrong when he said that public education should conform to it, nor the Committee of Public Instruction when they attempted to carry it into practice. Émile is to be taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, singing and drawing, national history orally by narrative, the principles of natural (undenominational) religion. Practical information is to be imparted by object lessons; and careful attention is to be given to physical and technical training. Might not this be a modern programme of primary instruction? It is a system which would tend to produce useful citizens rather than to train a few superior intellects to accomplish, or even fully to appreciate, great achievements in literature, science, and art.

The admirers and opponents of Rousseau have often done him injustice by confounding with his later doctrines the views crudely put forth in the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1753), and by trying to crush into one homogeneous and logical system statements and views really irreconcilable. His very inconsistencies show that he took a more comprehensive view of the problems with which he dealt, than his deductive method, and the abstract and arbitrary assumptions which form his premises, would lead us to expect. But to his followers in the next generation one text of the master was as authoritative as another; and they naturally cited those which flattered the passions or justified

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the policy of the moment; so that in the Jacobin Club and the Convention a paradoxical and unsuccessful prize essay was more heard of and had more influence than the philosophical *Social Contract* (1760), the moderate *Letters from the Mountain* (1764), or the generally sensible *Considerations on the Government of Poland* (1772).

It is only in the *Discourse on Inequality* that the state of nature is exalted as a golden age, from which civil society based on a compact obtained by fraud to perpetuate injustice has degenerated. In the *Social Contract* we are told that the civil is preferable to the natural condition, since in it duty takes the place of physical impulse, right of appetite, property of possession; that we ought to bless the moment of the contract which changed a stupid animal of limited capacity into a rational being and a man. Rousseau tells us that his object is to enquire whether there is or can be in politics any sure and legitimate rule of administration, taking men as they exist and laws such as are possible. But this purpose is soon forgotten; what is really discussed is the abstract and universal basis of political right; and men are taken not as they are, but as abstract beings out of all conditions of time, place, and circumstance. He begins by asking a question, Why is it that man who is born free is everywhere enslaved? And his answer implies that all existing governments are illegitimate; that there is but one government by natural (divine) right, the rule of the popular majority. For nature, he says, gives to no man authority over his equals. Force cannot, as Hobbes and Spinoza suppose, be the origin of right. For if so a stronger might would be a better right, and therefore all right fluid and uncertain.

When men reached a point at which co-operation was necessary for their welfare, the problem which they were called upon to solve was to find a form of association capable of protecting the person and the goods of each with the whole strength of the community, while each individual should remain as free as when in a state of nature. If the body politic which results from the social pact does not protect person or property, or unnecessarily interferes with personal freedom, the contract is violated and annulled. This would seem a strict limitation of the power of society, a bold assertion of the rights of the individual. Helvétius had written that everything is well done which is done for the public safety. The public safety, answered Rousseau, is nothing unless all individuals enjoy security. He denies the assertion of Grotius that a people could

liberty; so one-sided a contract would be void *ab initio*.
ration would compensate a man for the surrender of all the
humanity? Such a bargain would be contrary to law and
right of society to claim obedience from the individual
a that obedience being indispensable, in order to enable
rform the functions for which it was instituted. But no
iven by which we can judge whether the obedience is

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or is not necessary. To supply some rule determining at what point resistance to the authority of the sovereign begins to be legitimate, was no doubt one of the motives which actuated the framers of the Declaration of Rights. Rousseau himself says that the sovereign must judge what sacrifices the State may demand as necessary. But if so what remains of the rights of the individual? Moreover, he gave to his *Social Contract* a form which implies popular absolutism, the complete surrender by each member of himself and of all his rights to the community, that alienation of all individual liberty against which he elsewhere protests.

He excuses the inconsistency by pointing out that in the only legitimate State every individual is a member of the sovereign body. Everyone is at once subject and sovereign; and, if he is oppressed by the sovereign, it is by himself. He has moral liberty, for the law which he obeys is self-imposed. Besides, it is irrational to suppose that the sovereign — the aggregate body of citizens, which can have no interests other than those of the individuals of whom it is composed — will be tempted to act oppressively like a magistrate who is swayed by anti-social impulses and private interests. Rousseau makes two erroneous assumptions, that the interests of the part are always identical with those of the whole, and that the popular majority is always able to discern and willing to pursue the general interest. In his article *Économie* in the *Encyclopédie* he asserts axiomatically that the State is a moral being capable of volition; that the golden rule of every legitimate, *i.e.* popular, government is to carry out the general will, which always tends to the well-being of the whole and of each part and is always just — for the voice of the people is in truth the voice of God. It is unnecessary to point out the vast influence and the abuse of these principles in subsequent years; nor is it easy to read without a shudder, when remembering the crimes perpetrated in the name of popular justice, the commendation of a custom, attributed to the Chinese, of throwing into prison any official accused by popular clamour, "which is never raised without good reason."

That the only legitimate constitution is that in which the will of the sovereign people, or rather of the sovereign majority of free and equal citizens, prevails; that this will is always just, and that therefore a citizen is only virtuous so long as his will conforms to it; that the masses are always wiser and better than the few — these were principles easy to understand and likely to win popular acceptance. Little rhetoric is required to convince men that they are as good and as wise as their neighbours, and that authority not exercised by themselves is an abuse. The limitations and corrections suggested by Rousseau were forgotten or rejected. Although the people cannot delegate their sovereignty to the executive, he lays down the rule that the more numerous a people is the more powerful and vigorous ought the government to be, the larger the powers entrusted to it. If the State is small the executive

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may be numerous and weak; if large, the government should be entrusted to a few, and they ought to have a wide discretion — a truth ignored by the authors of the Constitution of 1791, though perhaps not forgotten by those who placed power in the hands of the Committee of Public Safety. Rousseau moreover expressly says that to be fit for political society men must already possess the social virtues; that the social disposition, which it is the object of the State to create, must already be there in order that the State may be formed. "Before the laws exist men must already be what the laws are to make them." To escape from this vicious circle he relies on the lawgiver, Lycurgus or Calvin, and on the sanctions of religion, an admission fatal to the historical reality of his Social Contract. Still less are all nations fit for liberty. If a people is to be free it must be mature — nor can it if once enslaved be made free. It is possible to acquire liberty; but once lost it cannot be recovered.

His ideal State was Sparta or republican Rome, as he conceived them to have existed, or rather a more perfect Geneva. "After full consideration," he says, "I have given the preference to the constitution of my own country"; but he did not believe that it could be copied except by a community with a small territory and limited population, least of all by France. "How great would be the danger of disturbing the vast masses which compose the French monarchy! Who could arrest the impulse once given or guard against the possible consequences? Even if the advantages of the new arrangement were indisputable, what man of sense would venture suddenly to abolish old customs, to change old maxims, and to alter that shape which an existence of thirteen hundred years has gradually given to the State?" Rousseau, therefore, would have been far more cautious than the Physiocrats in the practical application of his abstract doctrine. It would indeed be easy to cite many passages of sound practical sense, many luminous suggestions which would surprise those who only know Rousseau as "the great professor and founder of the philosophy of vanity," whose writings were the Jacobin "Canon of holy writ."

No attention was paid to him when he spoke words of soberness and wisdom, based on experience and common sense. Such remarks might be admirable; but there was little in them that was original, nothing that expressed the feelings and flattered the passions of the moment; and it must be confessed that they were out of harmony with the logical consequences of his abstract and universal principles. They were brushed aside by his revolutionary followers; and they have had no such effect on European politics as the clear and precise dogmas of natural equality and freedom, of inalienable popular sovereignty, and their corollaries: that every government not based on popular consent is a usurpation: that the people can at any moment dismiss their rulers: that — the nation being an aggregate of equal and independent units,

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whose will can only be discovered by counting heads — if owing to the size of a country a representative body is necessary, this assembly must represent not classes or interests but individuals. Whence it follows that manhood suffrage, equal electoral districts, a chamber of delegates, who may not pass measures which have not been submitted to the electorate, and the other characteristics of the modern democratic State, are institutions based on natural right; while that which was at one time the ideal of English Liberals, a polity based on the representation of organised bodies, classes, and interests by deputies entrusted with a wide discretion and constituting a real legislature, is not more legitimate than monarchy itself.

It has been said with some plausibility that the Constituent Assembly was Voltairian, while Robespierre and his followers in the Convention attempted to carry out in letter as well as in spirit the precepts of Rousseau not less in their religious than in their secular policy. The degree of 18 Floréal, affirming the belief of the French nation in the existence of the Supreme Being and in the Immortality of the Soul, accepted "the profession of faith of the Savoyard Vicar" as the established religion, and as a minimum of faith to be imposed on all citizens. For scepticism — by which he meant the agnosticism of Montaigne, of Bayle, and of Voltaire — said Robespierre, is aristocratic, while the materialistic and systematised atheism of the Encyclopaedists is selfish and anti-social; and neither must be tolerated. Voltaire had attempted to assert the existence of a Supreme Being, and the possible immortality of that mysterious particle we call our soul, against Diderot and Helvétius. But his common sense and sceptical arguments, his appeals to the evidence of design in the universe, and to the absurdity of dogmatising negatively when we know nothing, do not touch those complicated emotions on which religion depends. Not so the impassioned unction of Rousseau's rhetoric. It may be sentimental, vague, not quite untainted by a strain of insincerity; but it affects and stimulates the feelings through the imagination, and was the source of that romantic religious revival which prepared the way for clerical reaction under the restored monarchy. This result would have probably surprised Rousseau, who derived the religion as well as the constitution of his ideal State from his native town, not foreseeing that the emotions excited by his eloquence would, like his Savoyard priest, find greater satisfaction in the splendour and the far-reaching associations of Roman faith and ritual, than in the colourless Socinianism of Geneva.

There are passages in Rousseau which imply that much is amiss in the existing distribution of wealth; but nowhere does he suggest that it would be either possible or desirable to introduce Communism. Yet five years earlier than the *Contrat Social* a book was published, the *Code de la Nature*, in which communism is said to be the only organisation of

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society which can secure man's happiness, and therefore the only one in accordance with the will of his beneficent Creator. So little was Morelly, the writer, known that La Harpe, who refuted the *Code de la Nature*, attributed the authorship of the book to Diderot. But Morelly had already advanced the same views in a prose poem called *The Basiliade, or the Floating Islands* (1753), which described a communistic Utopia, and professed to be a translation "from the Indian." The *Code de la Nature* was the most systematic exposition of Communistic Socialism which had as yet appeared, giving a logical coherence to ideas derived from Plato, More, Campanella, and even Montesquieu. Self-interest is the universal motive, and when misdirected the source of all evil. Nature intended all things to be held in common, so that the interests of all should be identical. Each man pursuing his own interest would further that of the community, were it not that private ownership leads men to pursue discordant aims, injurious to each other and to society. Besides, it is unnatural for men to seek to injure each other. There is in man "a certain native probity" which has been destroyed by avarice, "the desire of possessing," the root of all vice. Morelly sketches the social order which would enable men to be as happy and as virtuous as is possible in this life, although as things now are he has no hope that it can be established. Although his book was not unread and had the usual advertisement of being burnt by the hangman, Morelly acquired so little fame that even the dates of his birth and death are unknown.

The voluminous writings of Mably (1709–85), the brother of Condillac, who shared some of Morelly's communistic opinions, are more celebrated, and had an authority with the legislators of the Revolution second only to that of Rousseau and Montesquieu. The most important of Mably's books were the *Conversations of Phocion on the Relation of Ethics and Politics* (1763), *Observations on the History of France* (1765), *Doubts on the Natural Order of Societies* (1768). Mably believes the individual ownership of land to be the source of all mischief. It causes inequality of wealth, of which the result is avarice, ambition, sensuality, indolence, and insolence among the rich, hatred and envy among the poor, and in the commonwealth misery, restlessness, and ruin. Reform is impossible except by some revolution which shall destroy all institutions unfavourable to equality, and bring about a complete change of manners and fashions. For it is not enough that the laws should aim at keeping all citizens at the same level of wealth and dignity. *Nil leges sine moribus.*

It is difficult to say how far Mably held any part of his ideal to be capable of practical application in his own time and country. Some buildings are, he says, too crazy to bear repair, some cesspools so foul that to stir them is to breed a pestilence. And he applauds Fleury, "the wisest minister of the century," for not attempting reforms, since it is a mistake to court failure. Yet in his *Observations on the History*

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of France, collecting whatever traces he can find of free institutions, he makes an attempt to find in the past that old constitution which Burke would have had the French rebuild. The French ought to attack the evil at its root — the despotic power of the Crown. The *Parlement* in 1756 ought to have established the principle that the nation alone has the right to tax itself. The Court would have been cowed by a general cry of approbation. No doubt such an opportunity will recur. He considers that the English are not sufficiently on their guard against despotism. The King should be powerless to do wrong. He should have no control over the army, still less be able to summon, prorogue, and dissolve the legislature at his pleasure, and to corrupt its members with titles and honours.

These and other practical precepts had a direct effect and were quoted in the debates of the revolutionary assemblies. But Mably's communism and that of Morelly, associated as it was in their writings with other tenets which formed part of the Jacobin creed, tended to discredit that creed in the eyes of the cautious; although communistic theories were repudiated by the vast majority of even the most radical reformers. Mallet du Pan accused the Jacobins of intending an agrarian law; Gouverneur Morris believed that they aimed at establishing Communism. But, although they knew the rich to be their enemies and the poor their supporters, the Jacobins were not so mad as to think of touching private property, and thereby converting the timid disapprobation of the middle classes into active enmity. "Souls of mud," said Robespierre, "who value nothing but gold, I do not wish to touch your treasures." He was convinced that under existing conditions it would be not less difficult to establish equality of wealth than Communism itself, which was confessedly chimerical. The sanctity of property was in principle as much respected by the Republic as by the old monarchy. The property of the *émigrés*, it is true, was confiscated, but so had been that of the Protestants; while the requisitions and other arbitrary measures of the Terror were no more due to communistic principles than the seizure of stores and the destruction of houses ordered by the commander of a beleaguered fortress. Even the profound misery of 1795 and 1796 provided Babeuf with followers rather than with disciples.

The little practical effect at the end of the eighteenth century of doctrines which were to be of such vast importance in the nineteenth century is another proof of the small influence of theory, unless it happens to fall in with the sentiment of the moment or to promise a remedy for those evils which are either physically most unendurable or most inconsistent with existing social and economic conditions. The Revolution was an attempt to apply in practice the principle of individual freedom: a negative principle, mainly valuable as an instrument to overthrow restrictions, which have lost their use and meaning and have become injurious. But it is remarkable that this negative principle was

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embraced with the fervour of a religious faith. The great work done by the philosophers was the part they took in exciting this fervour; and it was because there is little that is original in their teaching that it was received with enthusiasm.

It is when an author is expressing feelings already in men's minds, "when he is thinking articulately, that which those around him are thinking inarticulately," that his influence is greatest. A writer, therefore, who is essentially commonplace like Voltaire, is likely to have greater immediate influence on the fortunes of his country, though not on the future of mankind, than a Plato or an Aristotle. Even if we believe that the philosophers did not cause the Revolution, nor originate the ideas which determined the form it was to take, we must allow that they precipitated it by giving a definite shape to vague aspirations, by clearing away the obstacles which restrained the rapidly rising flood of discontent, by depriving those, whose interests and position made them the defenders of the old order, of all faith in the righteousness of their cause, and by inspiring the assailants with hope and enthusiasm.

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CHAPTER II

THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE

In France the Crown had always been the symbol of national unity and power. During the period in which the nation under the skilful guidance of Richelieu and Mazarin achieved supremacy in Europe, the royal authority became absolute in France itself. Louis XIV surpassed all contemporary despots in his sense of unbounded and irresponsible dominion. During his long reign the French Monarchy assumed its final form; and his system of government, although directed by weaker hands, remained in force until the outbreak of the Revolution. Fervid as were the French in their loyalty, they were not willing to allow that they were the subjects of lawless caprice. They clung to the distinction formulated by Montesquieu between a despotism of which the principle is fear, and a monarchy of which the principle is honour. The clergy and the nobles were tenacious of such privileges as the sovereign had spared; the protests of the *Parlements* against certain exertions of prerogative were often received with applause; in some Provinces the Estates kept up some tradition of self-government; and since the States General, although never summoned, had never been suppressed, they might be regarded as an essential part of the French constitution. But such remnants and shadows of the medieval polity, while they might save the self-respect of the upper classes or even temper the exercise of power in particular cases, could not conceal the fact that one man was master of France.

Despotic rule over a great civilised community implies a concentration of business so enormous as to exceed the capacity of one man, however able. It is the officials who govern; and the administrative system is the real constitution. Thus it was in France. The true centre of power was not the King, but the Royal Council. On the eve of the Revolution this was a body of about forty members, comprising the Ministers of State and a much larger number of persons who held no portfolio. The ministerial dignity might attract men of any rank; and Ministers were often, though by no means always, nobles or prelates. The Chancellor, or Keeper of the Seals, was usually a lawyer, as he had grave duties to

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perform in legislation and in connexion with the Courts of Justice. The Royal Household, Foreign Affairs, War, and the Navy, each gave employment to a Secretary of State. But perhaps the most influential Minister was the Controller-General of the Finances, whose duties, at first correctly expressed by his designation, were gradually enlarged until he became in fact Minister of Public Works, Minister of Commerce and Agriculture, and Minister of the Interior. The Controller-General, if, like Colbert or Turgot, he were a man of talent and energy equal to his task, might exercise the authority of a Premier. The title of Principal Minister rested with the sovereign to give or to withhold at pleasure. The Ministers took part in the general business of the Council; but, for the consideration of such weighty affairs as would in England be decided by the Cabinet, they, together with any other Councillors whom the King might select, met under the King's presidency in different committees known as the Council of State, the Council of Despatches (*Conseil des Dépêches*), the Royal Council of Finance and Commerce, and the Inner Committee of War.

The members of the Council other than Ministers were singly of far inferior consequence. Sprung as a rule from the upper middle class, they had entered the public service at an early age; they had worked their way up to posts of confidence and authority, such as that of Intendant; and they brought to the Council board the advantages of long experience and administrative dexterity. Their names were not familiar to the public; nor had they, unless possessed of extraordinary talent or influence, much prospect of becoming Ministers. But it would be a mistake to think that the ordinary Councillors were insignificant. In determining the general course of policy, in drafting new laws, in fixing the sum to be raised by taxation and the taxes to be imposed, the Ministers would necessarily have the largest share, and much would be settled in the ministerial committees. But there remained for the Council as a whole more work than it could perform. At every step in the progress of absolute monarchy and centralised administration the powers and the duties of the Council had been enlarged. The numerous officials of the Civil Service received their orders from the Council, reported to the Council, sought instructions from the Council in cases of difficulty, could be called to account for misconduct only with the sanction of the Council. The whole administration of a great kingdom, from the apportionment of the *taille* between the Provinces down to the repair of a parsonage, passed in endless review before the Council, which vainly strove to keep down the arrears of national and municipal business. Finally, it exercised a judicial power practically without limit, since it could at pleasure quash the decree of any ordinary Court and remove a cause into its own hearing.

From the central authority we naturally turn to consider its local agents. In France, as in the other kingdoms which dated from the

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Middle Ages, a number of administrative systems had arisen and decayed; and all had left traces at least in forms and titles. As the royal domain had been enlarged in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by the absorption of the great fiefs, France had been divided into *bailliages* and *sénéchaussées*, administered by a royal officer, the *bailli* or the *sénéchal*, somewhat resembling the Anglo-Norman sheriff; but his powers had become obsolete long before the opening of the eighteenth century. At a later time the kingdom had been divided into a number of *gouvernements*, answering roughly to the historic Provinces. The Governors were the military representatives of the Crown; they were usually men of rank, and sometimes insubordinate. They had therefore been deprived of all real power, while keeping their ample emoluments; and in the age preceding the Revolution the office of Governor was merely a rich sinecure. At length Richelieu had placed the whole of France under a new class of royal officers, the Intendants. The jurisdiction of each Intendant was known as a *généralité*, so-called because in each there was a Chamber of fiscal officers known as *généraux de finances*. An Intendant was assisted by a number of subdelegates (*subdélégués*), each of whom had a district known as an *élection*, not because there was any question of popular choice, but from certain fiscal officers known as the *élus*. In those Provinces which had preserved their Estates and were therefore known as *pays d'États*, the *élus* did not exist and the term *élection* was not in use.

The Intendant was to his district what the Controller-General was to the kingdom; he conducted the whole administration, and every kind of public business came under his care. The collection of the indirect taxes, indeed, belonged to the capitalists by whom it had been farmed; but the collection of the direct taxes fell to the Intendant. When the Council had fixed the sum total of the *taille* to be raised in the year and had divided it between the *généralités*, the Intendant apportioned the share of his *généralité* between the different parishes. The parish then fixed the quota of each inhabitant and was responsible for its payment. The Intendant fixed the quotas of each taxpayer in the *vingtièmes* and the *capitation*. The Intendant and his subdelegates carried out the balloting for the militia. For the maintenance of order the Intendant possessed the most ample powers. The rural police, the *maréchaussée*, was immediately subject to the central authority and therefore at his orders. Although the towns had a police of their own, municipal self-government was little more than a form, and the Intendant could dispose of this force also. Moreover the Intendant had a summary jurisdiction to repress disorder, and, when he sat with assessors who had received a legal education, could sentence even to death or to the galleys. Public works were also in the Intendant's charge, although, in Provinces where the Estates still met, he was relieved of the greater part of this business. In other Provinces the plan of public works was fixed by the Royal

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Council; the execution was directed by the Intendant; and, where recourse was had to the *corvée*, it was exacted by his subdelegates.

Another function of the Intendant was the relief of the poor. A large proportion of the labouring class were so needy that in time of war or in bad seasons they became destitute; and, as the steady encroachment of the Crown had almost annulled the free action of the landed aristocracy and the municipal bodies, it had to take the chief part in relieving their distress. The Council allotted to each *généralité* its share of the royal bounty; the Intendant assigned the portion of each parish, and with the help of his subdelegates directed the administration in detail. Since the time of Colbert the government had tried to further industry and commerce by regulating, constraining, teaching, and rewarding; and for all these ends it looked to the Intendant to execute its ordinances. The Intendant supervised with jealous care the action of every local authority. The style of *Monseigneur*, given not merely by peasants but by citizens, to the Intendants despite the fact that they were generally not of noble birth, would alone show how ample was their right of control and how unsparingly it was exercised. "I could never have believed," Law said to d'Argenson, "what I have seen while I had the charge of the finances. Know that this kingdom of France is governed by thirty Intendants." Without noise or show the Intendants before the Revolution had engrossed a power little inferior to that which the prefects of Napoleon afterwards exercised. The diversity of names and forms, even of usages and laws, in different parts of France, helped to conceal, but could not hinder, the uniform movement of the bureaucratic machine.

The all-pervading influence of the royal authority was not balanced by any general system of provincial self-government. Materials for such a system had once existed. It is well known that modern France was formed by a double process. Great fiefs, which had been all but independent, were resumed by the Crown; and territories belonging to various adjacent States had been annexed to the French monarchy. The lands thus united in a common subjection were in some cases separated by differences of blood, of language, and of civilisation; each had its own history and traditions; each had its own peculiar usages; and in each the inhabitants had been bound together by a provincial patriotism, not wholly extinct even in the eighteenth century. But the later course of events had tended to blur these distinctions, to centralise the life of France in the capital, to produce a common French type, and to weaken all that was either good or bad in provincial feeling. The Kings had instinctively furthered consolidation and had waged incessant war against provincial liberties. Most Provinces had anciently possessed Estates, medieval Parliaments of their own, which the Crown had very generally allowed to drop. Only in Artois, Flanders, Burgundy, Britanny, and Languedoc, and some other territories too small to be

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worth naming, did the Estates continue to assemble. Only in Britanny and Languedoc did they retain any real power, and even there it was a restricted and peculiar power.

These Estates had no legislative function. Even the rules of procedure which they adopted and the resolutions which they passed needed the confirmation of the Council. They could make grants to the Crown, but could not exclude its taxing power, while they could not raise a tax or a loan for provincial purposes without having its consent. They served chiefly to express the wishes of the Province to the sovereign, to execute a number of public works, and to collect a part of the royal revenue. Thus the provincial Estates were administrative bodies. Where they retained some vigour they secured to their respective Provinces an administration in many details milder and more reasonable than that which prevailed in other parts of France. Young remarked that the noble roads of Languedoc were made, not by forced labour, but by a tax which, however unfairly imposed, was a much lighter burden upon the peasants. In Languedoc, too, measures were taken to render the assessment of the *taille* more equitable and uniform. The finances of Languedoc were in a far sounder state than the finances of the kingdom. The provincial Estates had also the moral and political advantage of bringing together for the discussion of matters of public interest those classes which the insidious policy of the Crown had always endeavoured to disunite, and of giving some play to those energies which the servants of the Crown had always viewed with distrust. Yet the provincial Estates counted for little in France as a whole, and proved in the time of trial as frail as all other French institutions.

There were many reasons for their infirmity; but the chief reason was that the Crown and its servants for ages had done their utmost, not to improve and expand the provincial Estates, not to adapt them to the needs of a modern people and a high civilisation, but to get rid of them or, failing that, to reduce their power. Hence the Estates had disappeared in most Provinces. Hence, in the few where they survived, they remained medieval assemblies. For, widely as they differed in constitution, they were all more or less antiquated. In Languedoc the Third Estate had as many representatives as the clergy and the nobles; and all sat and voted together. But the deputies of the Third Estate were chosen by the municipal bodies of the towns which had no popular element. Even the nobles were not properly represented, since only the holders of certain lands were capable of sitting. In Britanny the composition of the Estates was still more unreasonable. The Third Estate had only forty-two deputies, who represented, as in Languedoc, not the towns but their close corporations. The First Estate contained no representatives of the inferior clergy. But all the nobles of Britanny were entitled to attend in person; and the nobles present sometimes amounted to twelve hundred. It is true that each Order sat and voted

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separately. But we cannot wonder that such an assembly should have laid unfair burdens on the lands of those who were not noble, or that it should have failed to gain popular support in its last struggles with the Crown. When we add that in the provincial Estates the peasants, the great bulk of the nation, were not represented at all, we shall understand how the National Assembly was able to discard them almost without a murmur from the Provinces.

It was one of the faults in the local administrative system of France before the Revolution that there existed no area of self-government intermediate between the Province, sometimes of enormous extent and containing as many as two million inhabitants, and the rural village or commune. The boundaries of the commune generally coincided with those of the manor or the parish, and had often been traced in remote antiquity, in Frankish or even in imperial times. Its constitution was in appearance at least popular. The supreme authority in the commune was the general assembly of the inhabitants, all persons liable to the *taille* having the right to attend. Thus, although domestic servants could take no part in the meeting, the day-labourer could. While bachelors were in many cases excluded, women seem to have been sometimes admitted. The villagers were summoned by the church bell and usually met in the open space before the church door. Ten inhabitants formed a quorum; but for certain purposes the presence of two-thirds of the parish or even a unanimous vote was required by law. The assembly had the management of the communal property, which was often valuable; for the common lands were extensive in France before the Revolution, and were vested in the community, not, as in England, in the lord of the manor. The assembly had also the duty of providing for the repair of the church and the parsonage and of the roads and bridges within the parish. It elected the communal officers, among whom the syndic and the collectors of the *taille* were the most considerable. Other duties such as that of fixing wages or prices were sometimes imposed upon it by the State. But it had little discretion in the exercise of its powers. The ignorance and incompetence of its members were often alleged as reasons for official control — and doubtless with some truth ; for the *seigneur*, who had lost nearly all his authority in the parish, did not care to take part in the communal assembly as a simple citizen ; and almost all the other householders were peasants, who, though not so utterly illiterate as is sometimes alleged, certainly were ill-educated and must often have been very torpid in mind.

Whatever the justification, the Intendant controlled every act of the commune. It needed his permission to assemble ; the officers of its choice had to be confirmed by him, and the confirmation was often withheld ; it could not buy or sell, let or hire property, or go to law without the sanction of the Council conveyed through the Intendant. De Tocqueville mentions a case where the parishioners who wanted to spend a sum little

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exceeding £1 had to obtain the leave of the supreme government. Thus to supervise the action of more than forty thousand communes was a task for which no industry could suffice; and the parochial business of France was always in arrear. The village syndics were sometimes twenty years behindhand with their accounts. The Royal Council was no less tardy. A commune, which had been demanding for some years past licence to cut its own timber for the repair of its own church, declared in 1721 that the ruinous state of the building left the congregation unsheltered to the storms. Four years later their petition had not yet been answered by the Grand Master of Waters and Forests. Delays and formalities made the simplest parochial undertaking costly. But, if the commune was to be pitied, the situation of its servants was still harder. The syndic was as much the agent of the Crown as of the commune, for he had to take part in the collection of taxes, the adjustment of the *corvée*, the levying of the militia, and the quartering of troops. His burthens were so heavy and his gains so small that the most respectable inhabitants were loth to be chosen, and it was sometimes necessary to force the office upon the person elected. The collector of the *taille* was strictly a servant of the Crown; and his office, for reasons which have been stated elsewhere, was even more disliked than that of syndic. Such a communal self-government could avail little to bring different classes together or to call forth administrative talent. The Crown and its Ministers had preserved the communal system as an instrument which might be useful and could not be dangerous, but they forgot that even the humblest form of self-government must be made attractive before it can become efficient.

In the administration of cities and towns the abuses were different, but scarcely less serious. The history of municipal institutions in France offers many resemblances to the history of such institutions in England and other neighbouring countries. Everywhere from the eleventh century onwards the growth of towns had led to a strenuous effort after municipal self-government. Each town had striven for itself and had gained privileges proportioned to its power. Each had its own charters and its own customs, for there was no general legislation on municipal affairs, and such resemblances as could be traced were due to individual imitation, the smaller towns trying as far as possible to gain the liberties already enjoyed by the greater. In France the Crown had fitfully encouraged the effort of the towns to free themselves from feudal shackles; but, when the feudal lords ceased to be dangerous, the Crown itself encroached on the rights of the towns, leaving them indeed the show of self-government, but taking away the substance. If we ignore the infinite variety of forms and titles, we find the government of French towns in the eighteenth century vested in two bodies, the General Assembly, and the *corps de ville*, or Town Council. The General Assembly had once been numerous, including in some towns all the citizens; but it had become small, often not exceeding sixty or seventy persons. Some of

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its members might be notables sitting in their own right. The majority were elected either by the professional corporations, especially of lawyers and public officials, or by the trade guilds, or by the parishes or quarters of the town. How many persons enjoyed the municipal franchise in any town would thus depend on a series of local and historical accidents; but it would appear that usually the greater part of the General Assembly was appointed by a small part of the townsfolk. In some towns the General Assembly filled up its vacancies by co-optation. This General Assembly discharged certain executive functions. It decided on the purchase or the sale of property, the contracting of a loan, the imposition of a tax, and other matters which varied from town to town. It also elected the Town Council, but its freedom of choice was often narrowed by the fact that certain corporations were entitled as of right to seats on that body. All the municipal business which was not despatched by the General Assembly fell to the Town Council.

So far what had happened in France was like what had happened in England. The municipal corporations had become narrow oligarchies, usually sluggish and often corrupt, in any case unequal to the tasks imposed by the growth of population and the progress of society. But, while the English corporations were left to themselves, the French corporations had felt the ceaseless interference of the Crown. This interference had sometimes been prompted by mere lack of money. Louis XIV had set the example of suppressing the election to municipal offices and making them purchaseable. The towns which could afford to do so redeemed the right of election, as it was intended they should; and this shameful device was copied in after years, so that before the death of Louis XV many places had lost and regained the right of election seven times. In other cases interference had been prompted by the desire of the central authority to absorb all power, by the mere love of uniformity, or by the honest wish to make municipal administration more effective. The royal edicts of 1692, 1764, and 1765, had been prompted by all these motives. Thus the office of Mayor was introduced into the towns where it had not existed before; and all Mayors were to be appointed by the Crown. Nor was it only the municipal constitution which the government modified at pleasure. Its power was felt in the daily course of municipal business. The Intendant broke in upon the freedom of municipal elections; he applied stringent remedies to disorder in municipal finance; and he urged the towns to ambitious undertakings, such as the construction of new streets and squares, new quays and aqueducts. Like the communal authority, the municipal authority needed the sanction of the Council, conveyed through the Intendant, for all dealings with property and for all lawsuits. Projects for public works had to be approved by the Council; the designs were often furnished by the engineers of the Intendant's staff, and contracts for their execution required the Intendant's approval. In the *pays*

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d'élection the Intendant audited the municipal accounts, while in the *pays d'états* a commission of the provincial Estates took that duty. Considering the narrow and irresponsible character of the municipal corporations, this stringent control by the State had many advantages. The Intendant often gave an impulse to public improvements and put a check on personal jobs. But it was not always in the common interest that he acted. Even his supervision did not prevent many instances of mismanagement and waste, while his domineering authority must have discouraged municipal patriotism and the exercise of original talent.

Thus local self-government in France had dwindled to extreme weakness. The old names and forms disguised in some degree, but hardly restrained, the action of the central power. By degrees it fashioned the mind of the people until bureaucracy seemed the only natural system of government. Popular discontent with the abuses of the system and zeal for new political theories led the Constituent Assembly to transfer the entire local administration from the servants of the Crown to the representatives of the Communes, Districts, and Departments. But this abrupt, unqualified change resulted in unutterable confusion, and when order returned the rule of expert officials returned also, and under the Consulate and the Empire became more absolute than it had ever been before. If we ask how the bureaucracy worked in the eighteenth century, it is not easy to give a just answer in few words. Compared with many other despotic governments which have been known among civilised men, the French monarchy might pass for wise and liberal. Far worse tyrannies have been known in Spain, in Italy, in Germany. The character of such a government depends largely on the character of the civil service; and the French civil service was above the average of the time. Many of its members were upright, intelligent, hard-working men; and a few, like Turgot, were men of exalted virtue and public spirit. We may say that, so far as there was change in the character of this class, it was a change for the better, even under Louis XV, and still more under Louis XVI. The humane and scientific spirit of the time was felt here as elsewhere. The development of the country by public works, the improvement of agriculture, the mitigation of the peasant's hard lot, attracted much more thought than formerly. The material progress apparent between the close of the Seven Years' War and the outbreak of the Revolution had many causes; but part of it was due to the spread of enlightenment in the official class.

The vices of the system were, however, enormous. The all-pervading action of the State enervated private enterprise, voluntary association, and municipal energy. The bureaucrats had an instinctive jealousy of self-help in any class or in any district. They were clever and industrious, but they were naturally unable to do everything and unwilling to let others do what they had to leave undone. Thus the tendency to expect all improvement from the State rather than from the efforts of those

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interested was ingrained in the French people, with the result that all the evils which afflicted society were imputed to the government. Especially in bad seasons, when a large part of the people suffered from dearth, and the well-meant but foolish interference of the executive with the transport and sale of corn aggravated the distress, suffering broke out in riot or even petty rebellion. Again, the bureaucracy in France, as in other countries, was slow and formal in its movements. Official reports and returns were numberless, correspondence accumulated, and the despatch of business, especially at the centre, fell into arrear. The pernicious practice of creating offices merely to sell them had increased beyond belief the number of useless officials, and therewith the friction and delay of business.

Most Continental States are still governed by a bureaucracy, but its action is tempered by the representative system, and by some measure of press criticism. Neither of these mitigating influences existed in old France. Criticism of the government was at the peril of the critic. Some freedom was allowed, especially to fashionable writers, in discussing speculative questions; but direct censure of administrative acts was almost certain to be visited with punishment. Secrecy enveloped the business of the State. Even the condition of the finances was almost unknown to the public until Necker published his *Compte Rendu au Roi*. That knowledge which the modern citizen can find in a dozen works of reference was then the monopoly of persons engaged in the work of administration. As a result of the principle of secrecy the government was sometimes made accountable for crimes which it had not committed, and which no man in his senses would commit. The wildest fables about the wickedness of the Court and the tyranny of the Ministers would find credence with an ignorant, suspicious, and suffering people. The same secrecy favoured much oppression and corruption in detail. An incapable or malevolent official could go on doing mischief for years with impunity. In the administration of a modern State unthrift and jobbery often mock at public censure. They must have been far more prevalent where they were so difficult to detect and so perilous to denounce.

A still more grievous fault of the French administration was its arbitrary and capricious temper. Were we to fix on the most characteristic difference between the government of France and that of England in the eighteenth century, we might say that in England the letter of the law, however imperfect, was held sacred, while in France the good pleasure of the sovereign, or of his servants, overrode all statutory restriction. The rulers of France seem not to have understood the value of fixed principles or the danger of irregular exceptions. Thus the great benefit which the action of the Crown had undoubtedly rendered to France in unifying and consolidating the State, in harmonising local usages, and curbing individual self-will, was half annulled by the new anomalies and disorders which the sovereign himself intro-

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duced. In a few luminous sentences de Tocqueville has summed up his long study of this inveterate evil:

"The government seldom undertakes or soon abandons the most necessary reforms, which, in order to succeed, demand a persevering energy; but it incessantly changes particular regulations or particular laws. In the sphere which it inhabits nothing remains an instant in repose. New rules succeed one another with a rapidity so strange that the agents of the State by dint of being commanded often have trouble in making out how they are to obey. Municipal officers complain to the Controller-General himself of the extreme variability of minor legislation. 'The variation of the financial regulations alone,' they say, 'is such as not to allow a municipal officer, were he irremoveable, to do anything else save study the new regulations as they appear, even to the point of being forced to neglect his own business.'"

Laws so lightly made, we may be sure, often remained without execution; and their maker taught the public to hold them cheap by the multitude of exceptions and variations which he ordered or allowed. It was thus that, even when an equitable tax like the *vingtièmes* was imposed, influential persons and corporations found means to elude it, at least in part. It was thus that personal freedom was disregarded at the request of those who could command influence at Court. The immediate evil was great, the indirect evil was far greater. The highest service which any government can render to a people is to instil a sense of law. The old French monarchy left no moral stay of public order save a blind reverence for the Lord's anointed. To quote de Tocqueville once more:

"People often complain that Frenchmen despise the law; alas! when could they have learnt to respect it? We may say that among the men of the *ancien régime* the place which the notion of law ought to occupy in the human mind was vacant. Every suitor demands a departure from the established rule in his favour with as much insistence as if he demanded its observance; and in fact the rule is hardly ever upheld against him, save when it is desired to evade his request."

The judicial as well as the administrative system of France had grown up in the course of ages, had never been revised on broad principles, and had ended in singular confusion and waste of power. During the medieval period Courts had been multiplied by the same influences which were at work throughout feudal Europe. Every lord had the right and duty of holding a Court for his tenants. Every chartered town sought to gain the amplest jurisdiction over its own citizens and the stranger within its gates. The Church covered the land with a complete system of independent Courts administering ecclesiastical law. Feudal, corporate, and ecclesiastical competition left little to be done by the royal justice. Duty and interest alike impelled the Kings of France to enlarge their jurisdiction; and to this end they found untiring auxiliaries in the legal profession, which became more and more powerful from the end of the

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thirteenth century onwards. By degrees the royal Courts overspread France and withdrew from the other secular Courts their most weighty business. But here, as in other fields, when the Crown had engrossed the substance of power, its reforming energy expired. Neither the desire for symmetry nor the consideration of the public good availed to bring about the final reform, the suppression of all Courts not emanating directly from the sovereign. The feudal and corporate Courts lingered on until the Revolution; and the nobles kept a remnant of jurisdiction long after they had been ousted from public life and stripped of political influence.

The ordinary royal Courts were of three degrees; the *Parlements*, the *présidiaux*, and the Courts of the *bailliages* and *sénéchaussées*. There were thirteen *Parlements*, all sovereign Courts as they were termed, Courts of the highest rank, from whose decision there was no appeal. Among these the most ancient, the most illustrious, and the most powerful was the *Parlement* of Paris, sprung from the Curia Regis of the early Capetian Kings, and in its organisation little changed since the fourteenth century. Its jurisdiction extended over a great part of the kingdom, and perhaps ten million human beings. The *Parlements* of Toulouse, Grenoble, Bordeaux, Dijon, Rouen, Aix, Rennes, Pau, Metz, Douai, Nancy, and Besançon, copied faithfully its claims and its pretensions. For the *Parlements* deemed themselves more than merely judicial bodies. Their function of registering the royal edicts, which has been noticed in earlier volumes of this work, they construed to imply a right of criticising a new law before they registered it, and even of refusing to register it at all. Although they would hardly have put their wish in plain, direct terms, they aimed at nothing less than a veto on legislation and taxation. Moreover they assumed an indefinite power of making police regulations, even upon subjects so alien from the dispensation of justice as the trade in corn. The executive government in turn trespassed upon their sovereign jurisdiction; for the Royal Council often quashed the decrees of the *Parlements* and removed cases which they had tried into its own hearing. It will be observed that until the Revolution there was no general Court of Appeal for the whole kingdom.

Next below the *Parlements* came the Courts known as *présidiaux*, instituted in 1551 by Henry II as tribunals of first instance in certain cases and as tribunals of appeal from the many inferior Courts, whether royal or feudal. They had the final decision in all civil cases where the value in dispute did not exceed 2000 *livres tournois*, and a decision subject to appeal where it did not exceed 4000. They also possessed a certain criminal jurisdiction. At the eve of the Revolution there were one hundred and two Courts of this class. In the third rank stood the Courts of the *bailliages* and the *sénéchaussées*. These administrative areas had been formed when the direct rule of the King succeeded the sway of great vassals, such as the Dukes of Normandy or the Counts of

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Champagne. Although the *bailli* or the *sénéchal* had now very little to do, his Court remained in use for petty causes, and received certain appeals from the feudal Courts. It was composed of the same persons as those who sat in the *présidial*; but a smaller number sufficed to give judgment. In all the royal Courts of justice a measure of independence was rendered possible by the fact that a seat on the bench was a recognised form of property. For the constant financial embarrassment of the Crown had induced Louis XII to make judicial office saleable, and Henry IV to make it hereditary subject to a slight annual payment. A judge had therefore a moral assurance that, so long as he observed the law, he would not forfeit his preferment. He was not a mere official who could be dismissed at pleasure and without the reprobation of the public. But the benefit incidental to the abuse was much impaired by the power of evoking causes from the ordinary tribunals to be heard by the Council, which power the Crown always asserted and often exercised, as well as by the number of extraordinary tribunals at its service and under its absolute control. Not only the Council and the Intendants, but many other strictly administrative authorities, exercised an ample jurisdiction, civil, or criminal, or both. Those Courts of Justice, which, like the Forest Courts of England, owed their origin to the sovereign's possession of immense Crown lands, had been carefully preserved wherever they could serve to fortify the royal authority. When all existing tribunals seemed insufficient, the Crown had from time to time appointed commissioners with extraordinary powers and a summary procedure, to deal with corrupt financiers, heretics, smugglers, and other troublesome offenders. These commissions, expressively styled *Chambres Ardentes*, had become rare in the eighteenth century.

Feudal jurisdiction in France admitted of three degrees, high, middle, and low. The *seigneur haut justicier* originally had cognisance of all causes, civil and criminal. But the gravest criminal offences, such as treason, coining, homicide, and highway robbery, had been withdrawn from his Court under the name of *cas royaux*; and it had become the practice to hand over to the royal judges all culprits taken within the *seigneur's* jurisdiction. A great deal of the civil litigation had passed to the same authority. The *seigneur*, who had *moyenne justice*, exercised a criminal jurisdiction, which varied greatly in different provinces. His Court was not competent as a rule to pronounce sentence of death, and was often restricted to imposing fines of moderate amount. He had also a certain civil jurisdiction, and powers of police on the highways and of inspection of weights and measures. *Basse justice* comprised only petty cases, civil and criminal, and gave authority to impose no penalty beyond a small fine. All these three degrees of justice included, however, the determination of questions relating to the *seigneur's* feudal rights, as against his tenants. The remains of feudal jurisdiction in the age of Louis XVI were therefore considerable. But the Crown in the

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course of ages had fettered its exercise. Litigants enjoyed a very extensive right of appeal from the feudal to the royal Courts. The *seigneur* was compelled to exercise his jurisdiction through a judge, who was required to be at least twenty-five years old, to be of good character, and to have given some proof of legal competence. The Crown had even taken steps to render the judge irremovable by the lord. Since, however, the judges of the feudal Courts were not highly paid, it was impossible to attract to them lawyers of the highest character or attainments. One man often acted as judge in several feudal Courts; and thus his place had to be taken by lieutenants so-called, usually country lawyers of humble standing.

The number of feudal Courts was prodigious. In the single province of Maine, neither very large nor very populous, there were on the eve of the Revolution at least one hundred and twenty-five. In the single city of Le Mans twenty-nine feudal Courts could be reckoned. In Angers there were sixteen. The parishioners of Gueugnon in Burgundy declared in 1789 that fourteen *seigneurs* had jurisdiction within its bounds, and that litigants were perplexed to know who had power to settle their disputes. The cities and towns frequently had a jurisdiction of their own, and Courts distinct alike from the royal and the feudal. Such a multitude of tribunals should have ensured cheap and speedy justice. But the entanglement of jurisdictions and the possibility of successive appeals went far to annul this advantage. Much evidence which has been preserved points to a litigious temper in the Frenchmen of that time. Lawyers swarmed even in the poorest country districts. One small parish of the Nivernais contained in 1789 half-a-dozen *procureurs* and as many notaries.

The multiplicity and confusion of tribunals corresponded to a multiplicity and confusion of laws. France was unequally divided between the region of customary and the region of written law. In the south the written law, the Roman law of Justinian, or in some cases of the Theodosian Code, was in force, although modified by local usage or modern statute. In the centre and north of France, except Alsace, customary law, modified in turn by statute or by the influence of the Roman system, bore sway. But within the two regions there prevailed the utmost local variety. Writers of repute have reckoned in France on the eve of the Revolution at least three hundred and sixty distinct bodies of law, in force sometimes throughout a whole Province, sometimes in a much smaller area. It is true that the differences between these were often few and slight, but they were enough to complicate the law and swell the bulk of legal literature. The mischief of such a multiplicity and confusion of laws had been acknowledged ever since the time of Louis XI; and in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the rules regarding certain subjects had been codified for the whole kingdom by royal ordinance. But the obstacles raised against a complete

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codification by prejudice or interest could be overcome only by an energy such as the governments of Louis XV and Louis XVI never possessed. The criminal law was more uniform and simple than the civil; but, like the criminal law of the surrounding States, it was unreasonable and cruel. The punishment of death was not more lavishly awarded than in the English law of that time; but inhuman forms of it, such as breaking on the wheel, were still in use for the worst offenders. The execution of Damiens in 1757, for attempting to murder Louis XV, displayed the same refinement of barbarity which had been seen at the execution of Ravaillac in 1610. The cruelty of the criminal law was enhanced by its inequality; for the nobles were exempt from certain painful or degrading punishments inflicted on the commons. The inquisitorial character of criminal procedure, the secret examination of witnesses, and the use of torture to extract a confession, odious as they must be reckoned, were common to many Continental States. The withholding of counsel from persons accused of grave crime was an abuse to be found in England as well as in France.

No blemish of French law before the Revolution has been more often and more justly denounced than the lack of any guarantee for personal freedom. That any Frenchman might be deprived of his liberty by a *lettre de cachet*, an administrative order under the privy seal, is perhaps the most generally known fact regarding the old polity of France. A person thus arrested might remain in prison for an indefinite time, as there was no legal process by which he could enforce his release. Since the action of the government was secret, his friends might not know whither he had vanished, and he might even be ignorant of the cause of his arrest. Nay, if the record of his case were mislaid, even the Minister responsible for such prisoners might not know why he was detained. It is true that in the eighteenth century a great proportion of the persons thus detained were domestic offenders, such as undutiful sons; for the *lettre de cachet* was an instrument of domestic discipline, and the philanthropic Marquis de Mirabeau took out many in the idle hope of subduing his unruly household. Again, most of the persons thus arrested underwent only a brief confinement, sometimes of weeks or days. Moreover, persons of respectable condition were the most frequent victims, and were often treated as mildly as was compatible with detaining them at all. The practice was none the less an abuse, lending itself to great injustice and cruelty. We may not absolutely credit some piquant stories as to the profusion with which *lettres de cachet* were issued under Louis XV, and we have reason to think that under Louis XVI they were issued with comparative forbearance; but in all matters of justice and police it may be fairly said that the despotic temper of the French monarchy thought far too much of enforcing submission and far too little of the rights of the citizen.

The military establishment of France before the Revolution was

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based on principles then common to all western Europe, although they have left hardly any trace in our time. Since the military improvements of the sixteenth century, discipline and skill had been valued more than numbers; and discipline and skill were thought to need lifelong practice. As the number of recruits needed in any one year was not great, governments shunned the trouble and unpopularity of forced enrolment, and enlisted men wherever they could find them, at home or abroad. The soldier's lot being hard, the comfortable citizen, and even the prosperous artisan, was not likely to offer himself to the recruiting sergeant. The very poor, the thriftless, and the dissolute, were his natural prey; and to ensnare them he might use every means of deceit and debauchery. On the other hand the still powerful prejudice handed down from the age of chivalry, that arms are the true profession for a gentleman, disposed the nobles of every land to accept commissions as officers, from their own sovereign if possible, but, failing that, from any other Christian sovereign with whom he was not at war; for, even so late as the outbreak of the Revolution, the calling of a soldier of fortune was not thought dishonourable. It was therefore difficult for a man of the middle class to become an officer; and, as he would not willingly become a private soldier, the middle class in the eighteenth century remained almost entirely unwarlike. In 1789 the Frenchman of the middle class felt as keen a thrill of novelty when he donned the uniform of a National Guard as when a little earlier he had recorded his vote in the elections to the States General.

In the reign of Louis XVI France maintained about 170,000 regular troops, of whom perhaps one-sixth were foreigners, Swiss, Germans, Irish, Poles, Swedes, Danes, and Italians. Prussia, with about one-third of the population of France, maintained an equal number. The slow historic growth of the regular forces could still be traced in many irregularities of organisation; and favour and privilege had cumbered the army with many grotesque abuses. In order to satisfy the nobility the officers had been multiplied out of all proportion to the privates. At the beginning of the Revolution there were 966 generals and 1918 staff officers; that is to say, one general for every 157 privates and one staff officer for every 79. Those who had enough influence gained their commissions early and without labour. The Duc de Choiseul raised an outcry by refusing to allow any more colonels of sixteen; and Marshal de Broglie declared all the officers from the sub-lieutenant to the lieutenant-general totally ignorant of their profession. The private was poorly paid, had no comforts, and could not rise above the rank of non-commissioned officer. Bad fare and hard usage made desertion common. In the Seven Years' War the French army had tarnished its old renown, and France had yielded the first place among military States to Prussia. Yet that there was excellent stuff in the royal army was proved by the number, both of privates and of officers, who

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rose to fame in the wars of the Republic and the Empire. Out of twenty-four Marshals of France created by Napoleon, eight had been officers and ten had been privates under Louis XVI; and Englishmen will remember the great achievements of their own army at a time when it was open, though not in the same degree, to many of the reproaches brought against the old army of France. The French discipline was not so harsh as the Prussian, nor harsher than the English; and at least one English traveller in 1789 was impressed with the healthy and vigorous looks of the common soldier.

The army was supplemented by a militia of about sixty thousand men. As the term of service was for six years, the annual contingent required was ten thousand, raised by a sort of conscription. The burthen was not more than France could easily have borne had it been fairly distributed; but the privilege enjoyed by many places and classes doubled the pressure upon those who were not exempt. Thirty-nine different descriptions of persons were excused on one ground or another. The people of the capital were not liable. As the militia service was thus rendered only by the poorest class of peasants, its hardships were not relieved by any honourable associations; and, as the militiamen were not well treated, the balloting was regarded with intense fear and dislike.

Since the form and operation of government always depend to a very great degree on the structure of society, this outline of the institutions of France may be rendered more intelligible by some notice of the classes into which the French people were divided. By taking account of the relative position and the conflicting interests of the clergy, the nobles, the *bourgeoisie*, and the peasants respectively, we may better understand the course which each of these orders took in the Revolution, and the character and effects of the Revolution itself.

Outwardly the clergy of France still held the position which had been theirs in the Middle Ages. They were the only authorised spiritual teachers; for, although the flame of intolerance was burning low, although the Protestants were but languidly persecuted, while in Alsace even the Jews were left in peace, the Catholic was the only religion known to the law, the Catholic the only worship publicly allowed. A very great number of those employed in the education of youth were clergy or nuns; and all other teachers were subject to clerical supervision. Politically the clergy were the first of the Three Estates, an order possessing valuable privileges, the only order which enjoyed even partial self-government. Lastly, the clergy were possessed of immense riches; and it was vaguely asserted that they held one-fifth of the soil of France. Inwardly it is true the condition of the Church was less satisfactory. The zeal of the clergy had cooled, their discipline was relaxed, and a spirit of indifference, even of enmity to religion, had become widely spread.

For want of accurate statistics the number of the French clergy at

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this period has been variously estimated. It was supposed in 1762 that they then numbered 194,000. It is certain that they were dwindling through the greater part of the eighteenth century. Taine thought that under Louis XVI they numbered 130,000, not very unequally distributed between regulars and seculars, there being about 23,000 monks and friars and 37,000 nuns. In an age of indifference the regulars were most apt to diminish. Thus in Troyes there dwelt in 1695 three hundred and twenty nuns; in 1774 there remained only ninety-one. In two spacious monasteries of the same city only ten monks were left. A royal edict of 1765 had ordained that, when the inmates of any religious House fell below nine, the House should be closed, the inmates transferred to another House, and the revenues carried to a fund available for certain religious or charitable purposes. Under this edict it is said that nearly four hundred Houses were closed, and that several of the less numerous Orders had vanished from the kingdom. Yet the *cahiers* of 1789 frequently refer to the existence of monasteries almost unpeopled. In the suppression of the Jesuits the government had taken a still bolder measure. Had no reaction intervened, the Orders of men would probably have shrunk to a few communities actively employed in education and charity. The secular clergy were not subject to a like decrease. There are said to have been 38,000 parishes in France; and the parish priests and curates numbered about 60,000. All the remaining seculars may have amounted to 10,000.

The wealth of the Church, although it cannot now be accurately measured, was very great. A committee of the National Assembly estimated its revenues at 170,000,000 *livres*, and Gomel thinks that they may have amounted to 200,000,000 *livres* — about one-half of the revenue of the Crown at the accession of Louis XVI. Fully two-fifths of the whole were derived from tithes, the residue from landed estate. Arthur Young admits that the tithe was levied with comparative moderation. It was nowhere a tenth, usually a twelfth or fifteenth, sometimes no more than a twentieth, of the gross produce. In many places meadows, olive grounds, and cattle, were exempt; and a new kind of crop, such as potatoes or clover, did not pay anything until the law was altered in 1783. Nevertheless the exaction was odious to the thrifty peasants, who had so much to pay; and the claim to tithe was everywhere most prolific of lawsuits. The tithepayer grumbled more because the bulk of the tithe went, not to the parish priest, but to distant Chapters or monasteries, which seldom remembered him in their bounty. The landed estates of the Church probably yielded more than 100,000,000 *livres* — no surprising return, if they really occupied one-fifth of the surface of France. It must be remembered that the great clerical domains were often ill-managed, and that religious Houses have often been indulgent landlords. The wealth of the clergy excited the

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more envy because it was privileged. The clergy were exempt from the *taille*, and had redeemed themselves very cheaply from the *vingtièmes* and the *capitation*. The clergy did indeed every five years grant the Crown a subsidy, whose free and voluntary character was expressed in the term *don gratuit*, and in time of war they often voted further sums; but these by no means balanced their exemptions. Even these subsidies they often raised by loans, afterwards repaid out of the *décimes*, a light tax on clerical incomes. The distribution of ecclesiastical revenues was yet another scandal, for lucrative sinecures were even more plentiful in the Church than in the State; and those who did most work had as a rule the least reward. The one hundred and thirty-four Archbishops and Bishops of France were singularly unequal in their revenues; but their average income amounted perhaps to 60,000 *livres*, about £2500 of English money; and their wealth was often doubled by the rich abbacies which they were allowed to hold. In consequence of the diversion of the tithe from its proper object most of the parish priests were shamefully ill-paid. The State had been forced to interpose and enforce a minimum stipend, the *portion congrue*, fixed in 1768 at 500 *livres* and raised in 1786 to 700 *livres*. Here again there was no equality, for some *curés*, who received the whole of the tithes, were comfortable or even rich. The *cahier* of Brûlon in Maine mentions *curés* enjoying an income of 10,000, 15,000, even 30,000 *livres*. The parish priest was entitled to fees for marriages, etc. (the *casuel*), and to certain dues, which the peasants frequently regarded as a grievance. The religious Houses varied in their condition from poverty to opulence.

The clergy enjoyed a real, though limited, power of self-government through their provincial and national assemblies. The national assembly of the Church of France met every five years on the King's summons. Each of the sixteen provincial assemblies sent as its representatives two Bishops and two of the inferior clergy. The assembly upon meeting elected a President and then divided itself into *bureaux*, which chose commissaries to treat of business in detail. It voted the *don gratuit*, and, in the spirit of an earlier time, joined to its gift petitions, which the sovereign received with respect and sometimes granted. Yet we must not overrate the liberties of the clergy; for, in things ecclesiastical as in things secular, the Crown had always been studious to enlarge its prerogative. The clerical assemblies might not promulgate any decree without the King's previous knowledge and approval. No new religious House could be established without his sanction. Without the same sanction no lands could be acquired or alienated by the clergy. The Crown exercised a patronage so vast and valuable as to ensure clerical obedience. By the concordat of the year 1516 Francis I had agreed with Leo X that the King should have the right of nominating Bishops and Archbishops, subject to papal confirmation, and should also be entitled to fill up a great number of wealthy abbacies. Many inferior preferments

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were in the King's gift. He was thus able, not merely to control the clergy, but also to bind the nobility to himself by new ties of interest. For all the archbishoprics, all but five of the bishoprics, all the commendatory abbeys, the commanderies of the Knights of Malta, and the noble Chapters of men and women, were reserved for persons of gentle birth, who received in this way a large proportion of the enormous ecclesiastical revenue.

In judging the character of the French priesthood during the eighteenth century we must distinguish between the higher and the lower ranks, as well as between the regulars and the seculars. The superior clergy, taken in the gross, were courtiers and men of the world. Some notoriously disbelieved the religion which they were supposed to teach; and some were dissolute in their conduct. Yet the majority, even under Louis XV, observed outward decorum; and here and there was to be found a prelate of sterling piety and benevolence. Nor need it be denied that the pride of birth and the feeling of assured independence, together with the tradition of Gallican liberties, gave to the French prelates a certain breadth and firmness of mind, and helped to save them from some failings which have been noted in their far more zealous successors. Professional talent and learning, it is true, were seldom found in this class, nor did any of them in the age preceding the Revolution gain glory by controversial or apologetic writings. They were silent or ineffective, while argument and wit and rhetoric were untiringly exerted against the characters of the clergy and the doctrines of Christianity. If an acute and vigorous intellect appeared among the French Bishops, he was too commonly a man of the stamp of Talleyrand, whom accident or influence had pushed into a splendid but incongruous position. No Bossuet, no Fénelon, shed the splendour of eloquence and imagination over the decline of the Gallican Church.

The inferior clergy offered a glaring contrast to their chiefs. Drawn mostly from a humble middle class, or even from the peasantry, since their office had so few worldly allurements, and condemned to poverty and a monotonous routine, they were rarely men of wide culture or polished manners; but they were usually regular and edifying in their lives. In spite of occasional scandals, such as will occur in every large body of professional men, the parish priests appear to have generally deserved and enjoyed the good-will of their flocks. They felt for the people from whom they sprang and amid whom they laboured; and they often entertained democratic opinions. They had indeed their own grievances, and they might be pardoned if they felt some bitterness in reflecting on what stamp of divine the richest preferments of the Church were so often lavished. Many of them regarded their Bishop as the common soldier regarded his noble colonel, and as the peasant regarded the lord of the manor. The abuses of the French system tended to alienate those whom both duty and interest should have drawn together;

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and the privileged orders, a mere handful among discontented millions, were themselves rent into hostile factions. In the first stage of the Revolution the sympathy of the parish priests ensured the victory of the Third Estate over the nobles and the prelates.

The regular clergy of France in the eighteenth century presented the spectacle so often seen when ascetic enthusiasm has almost died out. The religious Houses were still very numerous, and some of them were very wealthy; but they rendered no proportionate service to the community. A few Benedictines were honourably distinguished by their zeal for learning; and those Orders which busied themselves in works of charity or in teaching were kept healthy by employment. That large residue of men and women, who, having taken the vows, found themselves with no definite occupation, were at best useless and sometimes vicious. The religious Houses generally were liberal of their alms; but indiscriminate charity has everywhere made more beggars than it relieves. Religious Houses were often disliked by the peasants because they drew rent and tithes from parishes on which they conferred no benefit in return. They were incessantly denounced and ridiculed by men of letters and philosophers; they were regarded by many statesmen as a useless encumbrance on the national resources; they were so alien to the spirit of the time that they could not find a sufficient number of novices; and the monasteries, although not the convents, were slowly tending to extinction.

The eighteenth century in France, as in England, offered a contrast between tolerant public opinion and intolerant laws. The clergy retained enough of the old persecuting spirit to disgust the laity, but not enough to crush dissent. The government did not go so far as the clergy wished, and yet went far enough to share their unpopularity. Infinite bitterness was bred in the Church by the long and unmeaning warfare between the orthodox and the Jansenists. Protestants were still outlaws, denied a civil status, and so disabled from having an authentic record of births and marriages. If they assembled for divine worship, the congregation might be sent to the galleys and the pastor might be hanged. Under Louis XV the judicial murder of Calas showed that the spirit of St Bartholomew's Day was not extinct; but such incidents were rare, and Louis XVI gave a lesson to Protestant Kings when he made Necker Minister of Finance. Now and then feeble attempts were made to suppress the new rationalism. The publication of the *Encyclopédie* was at one time arrested. Some of the most eminent writers of the age were sent to prison, though none were detained for long or harshly treated. Voltaire thought it prudent to spend the years of his highest fame and power in exile, and only revisited Paris at the very close of his life. But such half-hearted persecution merely advertised new ideas and proclaimed the imbecility of the government. Its worst effect lay in imparting to the Revolution a tinge of anti-religious rancour.

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It is difficult to give the English reader a just conception of the French *noblesse* in the eighteenth century. Even the number of the nobles has been very variously estimated. Taine thought that there were about 140,000, or rather more than five nobles to every thousand inhabitants of France. The French *noblesse* corresponded at once to the English nobility and to the English gentry. It has often been termed a caste — correctly in so far as every child of gentle birth was noble — but incorrectly in so far as entrance to the class was easy; for, apart from the special favour of the Crown, any person might be ennobled by purchasing one of about four thousand offices. The French nobility as a whole was not rich. A few families possessing vast estates and attracting the lavish bounty of the sovereign were indeed as rich as the wealthiest English nobles. But the majority of French nobles neither owned wide domains nor could afford a splendid and luxurious life at Versailles. Some possessed very little land and drew nearly all their income from their seigniorial rights — rights analogous to those which an English lord of the manor enjoys against the copyholders. Such rights, often ill-defined and burdensome, were most unpopular, and bred infinite litigation which absorbed much of the revenue they produced. The poor noble was condemned by the prejudices of his order to remain poor, for he might not engage in a lucrative calling and was almost compelled to enter the army or navy. Pay was small, promotion was tedious, and the great prizes in these as in other fields were too often intercepted by favour and intrigue. A prejudice hardly less powerful, though sometimes defied, forbade the noble to marry any woman not of noble blood and thus recruit his fortunes with wealth gained in commerce or industry. The virtues and the vices of the nobility were alike adverse to minute thrift and petty gains. Hence the share of the nobles in the wealth of France was diminishing for many years previous to the Revolution. The French noble was usually poorer than a petty English esquire; and Arthur Young was told at Nîmes that many noble families in the Province of Rouergue contrived to live on fifty or even twenty-five *louis* a year.

The French nobles as a class were without political power. It is true that they enjoyed many unjust privileges, such as exemption from the bulk of the direct taxes and a monopoly of field sports. Again, those nobles who surrounded the sovereign, waited on his person, and shared his pleasures, had ample opportunities of procuring favours for themselves and of doing harm to those who had incurred their hatred. Moreover, the officials of the Crown observed in their dealings with the nobility a forbearance and a courtesy, a respect for the rights of human nature, which were too often forgotten in dealing with the other classes. For after all the King of France was a French gentleman, who shared the tastes, habits, and prejudices of his order, and wished to gratify his fellows so far as was compatible with his own absolute power. But that

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absolute power came first in his thoughts and in the thoughts of his servants. No independent will might be allowed to impede the course of his prerogative. For centuries the Crown with its lawyers and officials had been sapping the power of the *noblesse*, and had at length reduced it to political nullity. The nobles had lost all voice in making laws and levying taxes when the States General ceased to meet. The bureaucracy had carefully stripped them of administrative power in their respective neighbourhoods. They had no part in the levying of the militia, in the relief of the poor, in the assessment of taxes, in the execution of public works, or in enforcing the regulations which controlled commerce and industry. The only political privileges which they retained were a share in the Estates of the few Provinces where Estates had survived, and an enervated feudal jurisdiction. The French noble had no opportunity of combining with his fellows, or of offering himself as a leader to the commons. A number of gentlemen could not meet for any public purpose without official leave. The *noblesse* had never shown eminent political capacity; and what they had, withered under conditions so deadening. At the outbreak of the Revolution not a few nobles gave proof of generous ardour for the common good; none save the discredited vagabond Mirabeau displayed the acuteness or resource of the born statesman.

The French *noblesse*, as the event proved, was unpopular. It could hardly have been otherwise, for it was a body sharply defined by the titles, forms, and privileges most apt to wound the pride as well as the self-interest of other classes. Although manners were more humane in France than in some of the adjoining countries, the *noblesse* often displayed the arrogance natural to men who are not merely taught to think themselves superior, but have no occasion to solicit other men's suffrages. The isolation of the *noblesse*, save in a few districts, was complete; for the policy of attracting the nobles to Court and keeping them in attendance on the sovereign had rendered the most illustrious and wealthy of that order strangers to their own estates. When a noble family, after long residence at Paris or Versailles, went down to the ancestral mansion, it usually sought to replenish its purse and lived frugally until it could return to the centre of power and pleasure. The significant phrase, "exiled to his estates," tells us how the courtier regarded a sojourn in the country. Such a landed proprietor could not know the wants of his people or gain their good-will by furthering their welfare, but was often obliged to press them for the last farthing in order to feed his artificial and expensive manner of life. The poorer nobles, who lived in the country because they could not live so cheaply anywhere else, were as little able to improve their land, to help the peasants, or to encourage local industry. As a class the nobles had become useless. Their proprietary rights very generally took a form which hindered the progress of husbandry; their obsolete prejudices debarred them from

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lucrative callings; and the jealousy of the Crown excluded them from public life. Arrogance, isolation, and futility, rather than any enormous wickedness, seem to have been the causes of the ill-will felt towards the French nobles. Very bad men are found in all times and in all classes, and certainly abounded at the Court of Louis XV. But much the greater number of the nobility had not the means, even if they felt the wish, to vie with the Regent Orleans or the Duc de Richelieu, and astonish Europe by prodigal lust and riot. The ordinary French noble was a man of narrow ideas and strong prejudices, who cherished a false and flattering notion of the consequence of his own order; but he was often a man of honour and integrity, who led a spare and frugal life and taught his children some virtues which our commercial age is too prone to ignore.

Disunion completed the weakness of the French nobility. Even a small body of men cannot long be held together save by the effort to get or keep something of value to all the members. The English landed interest found such an object in political power and its advantages. The French nobles had no common tie of that kind. The nobles of the Court, who formed the most elegant society in Europe, despised their rustic brethren. The provincial noble swelled with anger at the thought that the reward of his campaigns and scars was intercepted by trifiers and flatterers at Versailles. The noble of ancient lineage flouted the rich upstart who had bought an office conferring nobility, and affected to be familiar with descendants of the Crusaders. The "nobility of the sword," as it was termed, which made arms its career, looked down upon the "nobility of the robe," which preferred to fill, generation after generation, the more dignified places in the judicature. The absolute monarchy which denied any scope to combined effort, and the privileges which seemed to exclude all vulgar competition, left the French nobles free to indulge a mutual jealousy which only perished with the order.

The middle class was very differently composed in France and in England. In England there has always been a rural middle class either of yeomen or of substantial tenant farmers. But in France tenant farmers were rare save in a few Provinces; and the proprietor who cultivated his own land had usually so little as not to rise above the degree of a peasant. Throughout the greater part of France the lawyers made up the chief part of what middle class there was in rural districts. Thus the French middle class was eminently urban, a *bourgeoisie* in the proper sense of that term. The towns had gained privileges and exemptions of various kinds proportioned to their wealth and power; and those citizens who belonged to the governing body or to any of the professional corporations were usually favoured above their fellows. The unfair and oppressive taxation piled upon the dwellers in the country, especially the tax known as the *franc-fief* payable by every person who, without being

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noble, held a fief, had hindered prosperous citizens from buying small estates and setting up as squires. They preferred to buy an office, and with it the privileges and the dignity of a servant of the Crown. In the country a townsman would have found little society; while at home he had friends and connexions who gave him consequence, and could often exact full reparation for any affront offered by a noble.

French industry and commerce had grown steadily since the death of Louis XIV; and the urban class had increased in numbers and riches. Towns were indeed both few and small, if judged by the standard of our own time. According to a return prepared for Calonne in 1787, France then contained seventy-eight towns with upwards of 10,000 inhabitants and an aggregate population of nearly two millions. One hundred years later there were in France thrice as many towns with upwards of 10,000 inhabitants; and their aggregate population was more than four times as large as in 1787. Levasseur thinks that Paris at that time contained from 600,000 to 650,000 inhabitants, less than a quarter of its present population. The return prepared for Calonne estimated the population of Lyons at 135,000. No other city exceeded 100,000, and only five had more than 50,000. But it is doubtful what trust can be put in these statistics; and much higher figures are given by some contemporary writers. In point of health, convenience, and safety, the towns of France were also defective. Yet several were very prosperous; for France then enjoyed a superiority in certain manufactures which has been partly lost since; and the West India trade, in spite of frequent interruption by war, was most profitable. The towns began to put on a modern aspect. New quarters were built in spacious streets and squares; promenades were laid out on the site of the old ramparts; the streets were better paved and for the first time generally lighted; and a purer and more copious supply of water was brought sometimes from a considerable distance. At Rheims Arthur Young felt bound to confess how much French cities surpassed English in their dignified and ornamental appearance. At Nantes he lodged in a new hotel which had been built at a cost of 400,000 *livres*; and the theatre, "twice as large as Drury Lane and five times as magnificent," filled him with wonder. Bordeaux surprised him no less. Dr Rigby was similarly charmed with Lyons and Marseilles. The citizens of these great towns must have been rich and luxurious.

In truth the *bourgeoisie*, apart from such legal privileges as they enjoyed, were in many respects fortunate. The multitude of splendid foundations made a liberal education cheap and often gratuitous. The citizens were very generally free from the militia service, and the conscription was as yet unknown. Nearly all lucrative employments were filled by men of this class. It supplied the great majority of lawyers, judges, and civil servants, the contractors who reaped a rich harvest in every war, and the financiers who farmed the indirect taxes. If the

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bourgeoisie had little land, they possessed nearly all the capital of France, held the bulk of the public securities, and counted many a noble and prelate among their debtors. Intelligent, frugal, and laborious, they were always improving their stock; and every year they became a greater force in the kingdom. And yet this class which had so much to lose was profoundly discontented. With a few illustrious exceptions, such as Mirabeau and Lafayette, the leaders of the Revolution in every period of its history, even during the Terror, came from this class. The *bourgeoisie* had studied the writings of the philosophers and economists, and had lost its deference for the priest and the noble. It longed for a share of power and consideration proportionate to its talent and culture. It wanted a real municipal self-government and a parliamentary constitution which would give it a direct voice in public affairs. It was irritated by the constant official meddling with the processes of industry and the movement of commerce. It understood how much wealth was lost for lack of simplicity, equity, and reasonableness in the fiscal system. It watched with alarm the waste and disorder which imperilled its own savings advanced to the State. It resented an almost entire exclusion from the army, the navy, and the diplomatic service. Above all it was embittered by the honorary distinctions of the nobility, and by the insolence of the more foolish nobles. Even the reflexion, that any opulent citizen could easily be ennobled, seems to have had no effect in soothing this exasperation. With these partly selfish motives for desiring a thorough reformation, there mingled beyond doubt that generous and humane enthusiasm, which was so widely spread through France in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Such feelings had not been sobered by any experience of public life or by any provident fear as to what might ensue were the old order too roughly assailed. The *bourgeoisie* were not yet aware of any danger from below; nor could they divine that in no long space of time they would themselves be the theme of invective as bitter as Diderot or Champfort had ever poured forth against Kings and priests.

Whatever the prosperity of the towns, France remained eminently agricultural; and it would appear that, after deducting the townspeople, the nobles, and the clergy and other professional men in the country districts, four-fifths of the nation, fully twenty million souls, were employed in tilling the earth. An agricultural middle class hardly existed save in those north-western Provinces, Normandy, Picardy, Artois, Flanders, and the Île de France, where proprietors were accustomed to let their land in large farms. Elsewhere nearly all the agricultural population were peasants. Thus the peasants vastly outnumbered all the other classes of French society put together. The condition of the peasants was undoubtedly a prime cause of the Revolution; but, since it varied in different parts of France and our information is imperfect, it has been very differently represented by different writers according to

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the regions which they knew best, their temperament, or the political opinions which they cherished.

The bulk of the French peasantry had achieved personal freedom. Villenage had been declining in France ever since the twelfth century; and the number of persons more or less unfree in their status at the accession of Louis XVI did not exceed fifteen hundred thousand. These were mostly crowded together in a few districts. Louis emancipated the last serfs on the royal domain, and might well have enforced a general emancipation; but serfdom was so exceptional that such a reform would probably have had little influence on the course of events. In the administration of their communes the peasants had also been freed from the control or supervision of their lords. That their local independence was little more than a form, was due to the action of the Intendant with his subdelegates, not of the gentry, who had been so carefully divested of administrative power.

The French peasants had also acquired an immense interest in the land. For lack of full and trustworthy statistics we cannot speak precisely as to the distribution of real property. But a recent writer of authority has accepted the opinion that before the Revolution one-fifth belonged to the Crown or was communal property, one-fifth belonged to the clergy, one-fifth to the nobles, and two-fifths to the Third Estate. As few of the middle class were landowners, the share of the Third Estate belonged mostly to the peasants; and the peasants, who made up most of the rural communes, must be regarded as holding nearly all the communal lands. It appears that the peasants were always buying land and so changing the proportion in their favour. All the testimonies point to an enormous number of petty properties in France under Louis XVI. Arthur Young states that they abounded in almost every part of France and supposes more than one-third of the kingdom to have been occupied by them. Some writers have thought that very small properties were as numerous then as they now are in France, the great estates confiscated in the course of the Revolution having been bought in larger portions by purchasers often belonging to the middle class. The lands still held by the Crown, the clergy, and the nobles, were in some Provinces let in farms of considerable size, but in most to peasant *métayers*, the lord furnishing a variable proportion of the capital required, and taking a variable proportion of the gross produce. Young thought that perhaps seven-eighths of the land let were held on this tenure. An enquiry into the condition of the French peasants under Louis XVI is therefore threefold, according as it relates either to the hired labourer in the districts of large farms, or to the *métayer*, or to the petty proprietor cultivating his own land.

The condition of the hired labourer seems to have been as good as in many parts of England, better than in most countries of Europe. The districts where large farms held at a money rent abounded were

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among the best tilled, and the farmers were substantial men. The labourer earned tolerable wages, and sometimes saved enough to buy a patch of land. It was not these districts which broke out into anarchy in the first months after the meeting of the States General. It was the districts full of *métayers* and small proprietors that rose up against the *seigneurs*; and these were the classes alleged to have been most wretched. Arthur Young's verdict on the *métayer* system has been often quoted. "In this most miserable of all the modes of letting land...the defrauded landlord receives a contemptible rent; the farmer is in the lowest state of poverty; the land is miserably cultivated, and the nation suffers as severely as the parties themselves." As to the petty proprietors, he concluded that "small properties are carried much too far in France; that a most miserable population has been created by them which ought to have had no existence." Young had a high standard both of farming and of comfort; the impressions of other travellers were sometimes more favourable. Walpole, in 1765, thought the condition of the people wonderfully improved within his own recollection. "The worst villages are tight, and wooden shoes have disappeared." Dr Rigby, in 1789, was in raptures with the aspect of France; and, though a hasty traveller, he was not a contemptible witness, for he was a man of talent, accomplished in natural science, and an agricultural amateur from the pioneer county of Norfolk. Young himself acknowledged that in the regions of vines and maize and olives, as well as in some northern Provinces, "France possesses a husbandry equal to our own."

It would be more easy than useful to multiply general assertions of contemporaries on both sides of the case. The evidence which Babeau has collected as to the domestic economy of the peasants tends to show that they were as a rule meanly and often wretchedly housed, but that their diet varied in a surprising manner from one district to another. Here they ate good bread made chiefly or entirely of wheat; there rye bread was the staple article of food. In some places they ate meat only on holidays; in other places they consumed as much animal food as the best paid English labourer. Those differences of soil, climate, and access to markets, which still render the peasant's lot so unequal in different parts of France, were still more potent when communication was difficult, when fiscal pressure varied from one region to another, and when the movement of produce was checked by so many artificial barriers. Babeau has shown that the peasant family often accumulated a surprising quantity of clothes and linen; and that peasant women usually allowed themselves some trinkets, at least a cross and chain of silver, sometimes of gold. To what extent the elements of knowledge were diffused among the peasants is an equally interesting and difficult enquiry. Many communes possessed an elementary school; but for lack of funds the schoolmaster was usually ill qualified, and the buildings and appliances were such as would now be regarded as

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wretchedly insufficient. Taine's assertion that out of twenty-six million French people only one million could read is in itself improbable, and certainly not proved by the few particulars which he adduces. Babeau professes to have established that in the districts now forming the Department of the Aube seventy-two per cent. of the men and twenty-two per cent. of the women knew how to read. Yet a great number of the municipal officers elected under the laws of the Constituent Assembly are said to have been unable to read or write.

It might have been thought that the difference would be glaring between the *métayer*, who gave his landlord a large part of the produce of the land, and the petty proprietor. But by far the greater number of such proprietors were what we should term copyholders not freeholders. From the twelfth century onwards the great proprietors had been selling land to the peasants, not for a sum paid down, but for perpetual rent-charges and services. The progress of agriculture and the fall in the value of money had often made the rent-charge insignificant; but the services were felt to be more and more irksome as the times of the villenage became more and more remote. The peasant chafed more and more under the *corvée seigneuriale* — the claim for a certain amount of unpaid labour — the *banalités* which obliged him to send his corn to the *seigneur's* mill, his grapes to the *seigneur's* winepress, or his flour to the *seigneur's* oven, the *péages seigneuriales* — tolls levied on the roads and rivers of the vicinage for the *seigneur's* benefit — the *droit de colombier* or right of the *seigneur* to keep an indefinite number of pigeons, which found their food in the adjoining cornfields, and the *droit de chasse*, which reserved every kind of game within the manor for the *seigneur's* amusement. Such manorial rights inflicted on the peasant a loss out of all proportion to the gain of the lord. What deduction from the gross value of the peasant's land they implied we cannot tell, for they varied from manor to manor, and the estimates which have been attempted are all more or less uncertain. But experience everywhere has shown that, when the cultivator comes to regard himself not as tenant but as owner, all rents and services appear intolerable. It has been found needful to provide for the enfranchisement of copyholds in England, and for the purchase of farms by the tenants in Ireland. An enlightened government would have enforced the commutation of manorial rights in France.

A critical historian will not adopt without reserve those descriptions of the appalling misery of the French peasants which have been so often copied from one book into another. Yet there are solid reasons for thinking that most of them led a very hard, pinched, insecure life. The condition of the petty farmer or freeholder is not easy even under the more genial circumstances of the present day. In France one hundred and fifty years ago his technical skill and command of capital were far less, and his difficulties were far greater. He was subjected to unfair and excessive taxation, assessed and collected in such a way as to

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inflict the utmost loss and annoyance. He had to pay tithe. When he wished to take his produce to market he met with many hindrances. Although the highways were often superb, the cross-roads were usually villainous. On every road and every river the peasant might expect to pay toll to some lord or corporation or city or to the Crown itself. Often he had to pass one of the internal lines of custom-houses. In selling his corn, especially, he was hampered by edicts of the King and regulations of the *Parlements*. If his own crops failed in a bad season, the same obstacles hindered food from coming to him, and forced him to pay dear for it or go without. Before the extraordinary improvement in communications due to steam, all countries were liable to times of scarcity, even of famine, unless, like England and Holland, they were everywhere accessible to water carriage, or, like Lombardy, unfailing in productiveness. The frequent recurrence of dearth in France before the Revolution does not imply so absolute a penury in the mass of the people as we are now apt to assume; but it does imply that their condition was bad, and in a country so fruitful and among a people so thrifty proves how injurious were the fiscal and agrarian systems.

If we judge France in the eighteenth century by the standard of to-day, we must pronounce French institutions clumsy, incoherent, and unjust, and a great part of the French people wretchedly poor and half-civilised. Yet France held the first place among European kingdoms; and if the condition of the lower classes was better in England, in the Netherlands, in a few favoured parts of Germany, and in northern Italy, it was probably worse in most of the German countries, in Naples, in Spain, and in Ireland. From the close of the Seven Years' War to the outbreak of the Revolution France was growing in population, riches, and enlightenment. A reasonable and humane temper had spread so widely among administrators and judges that the spirit of government under Louis XVI was very different from what it had been under Louis XIV. But in a society where personal freedom was general, landed property widely diffused, and every class aspiring to equality with the class above, evils, which elsewhere might have been borne in patience, were felt to be intolerable. The long reign of a slothful and sensual Prince gave time for discontent to accumulate and criticism to become embittered. Class was divided from class; old institutions and beliefs became objects of scorn; crude theories and impossible hopes gave a new sting to injustice and oppression; and discerning strangers could foretell, even while all was calm, the approach of a tremendous catastrophe.

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CHAPTER III

FINANCE

THE generalisation that money is the root of all revolution has the defects of its simplicity; but among the varied influences which provoked the French Revolution vicious finance takes the first place. Apart from it, other causes, seemingly independent, lose much of their significance. Even the religious controversy owed much of its acuteness to a sensitiveness about the rights of the *Parlement*, which were prized and feared mainly on account of their bearing upon public finance. Misgovernment made itself chiefly felt in the unequal and excessive pressure upon the taxpayer, which alienated the affections of the people from the government; and the refusal of the *Parlement* of Paris to legalise by registration permanent additions to taxation necessitated the convocation of the Assembly of Notables, and subsequently of the States General, which grew into the Constituent Assembly.

The problem before Louis XVI was to avert imminent bankruptcy while relieving the excessive pressure of taxation upon the lower and middle classes. No system, no expedients, could effect these objects without such a remodelling of the constitutional system and the machinery of government as would have amounted to a complete, if bloodless, revolution. Turgot's minute to the King upon municipalities indicates this clearly: "The mischief comes from the fact that the nation is completely without a constitution." Finance necessitated organic changes in the State. The present financial system of Russia works, it is true; but it is not one which the history and temperament of the French people would have allowed them to accept from Louis XVI. Roederer, addressing the Constituent Assembly, said: "The unanimous mandate of France has settled the question. Finance must be placed outside the interference of the Executive power." The Assembly virtually took upon itself the functions of Treasury control and of audit — the authorisation of expense, and the scrutiny of accounts; but the task was an impossible one for its financial representatives — at best a collection of untrained amateurs already absorbed by politics. It was left to the Empire and the restored Monarchy to introduce a rational financial system.

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France in the eighteenth century was without a budget. The very word first officially appears in a law of 1806. Living from hand to mouth, its accounts little better than statements of balances in the Exchequer, or of cash receipts and payments actually effected, it may almost be said that the financial system of the *ancien régime* was to have no system. The history of Revolutionary finance will be dealt with in a later chapter. We proceed to consider the resources of government, the machinery of financial administration, and the pressure of taxation in the reign of Louis XVI.

The *domaine*, or feudal property of the Crown, corresponding in the main to our Crown lands, sufficiently provided for the needs of the early Kings of France; they "lived of their own," with more than sufficient to cover the expenses of their household and government. This favourable financial position stimulated, it is asserted, the growth of kingly power; it pushed the monarchy in the direction of assuming new functions and extending its sphere of influence. On the other hand, it infected public finance till the end of the eighteenth century with a belated feudalism. The accounts of the King were his private concern, not to be divulged to a profane public becoming increasingly sensitive to its powerlessness in determining the forms or the amount of taxation. Bargains, exemptions, privileges, were at the will of the sovereign. Particularism degenerated into chaos. Various causes, including, on the one hand, the alienation of royal properties by sales and gifts, and, on the other, the increase of expenditure due partly to the increased wealth and population of the country, partly to costly wars, reduced the King at an early stage to the necessity of appealing for additional resources. In 1439–51 the Estates of Languedoil lost their control over direct as they had previously lost it over indirect taxation. The annual *taille* amounted then to 1,200,000 *livres*, and was raised entirely from the Third Estate: the nobility and clergy were exempt.

The *taille* was from time to time increased, until, on the eve of the Revolution, it produced 91 millions of *livres*. To escape payment was a mark of social distinction: magistrates and their subordinates, financial and Court officials, members and officers of the Universities, and other classes, secured exemption. Corporations and towns compounded with the Treasury; and the number of *taillables* continually decreased, while the total burden to be borne became heavier and heavier. In a few provinces the *taille* was based upon real estate and assessed upon a land register, thus becoming, in reality, a land tax. Elsewhere, it was personal and arbitrary. The total was fixed by the Royal Council once a year for each *élection*, except in the *pays d'états*, where the sum demanded by the Royal Council was voted and apportioned by the provincial assemblies. The amount required from each *élection* once decided, the quota of each parish was arrived at by the *élus*, at first nominated by the people, but already in the fifteenth century by the

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King; and the share of each inhabitant was assessed by persons chosen in the parish. The assessment varied with the presumed wealth of the taxpayer and depended upon his mode of living and his apparent prosperity. The contribution was collected by receivers chosen in the district and made personally responsible for the payment of the full amount. Taxpayers deliberately lowered their standard of living, and refused to stock or cultivate their farms to the best advantage, having found by experience that the increased taxation following upon any evidence of improvement was often more than sufficient to deprive them of the fruits of increased industry and enterprise. The *taille* was, in this way, a distinct check to the creation of wealth and to the increase of comfort. The Constituent Assembly pronounced it responsible for "a negligence, a deprivation, and an insalubrity in the majority of rural dwellings, most injurious to the comfort and even to the preservation of the tillers of the soil." The so-called *contrainte solidaire* rendered the wealthiest inhabitants liable to imprisonment until the whole *taille* of their district had been paid, even though their own contributions had been faithfully discharged. If they made good the deficiencies of the collector, the parish was assessed a second time in one year in order to repay them. As many as 95 collectors in one *élection* of Champagne were imprisoned at one time.

The *capitation*, or poll tax upon the head of each household, was first established in 1695, during the war of the League of Augsburg and was suppressed after the Peace of Ryswick, but renewed in 1701 on the occasion of the Spanish War. It was regarded as a war tax, to be abandoned six months after the conclusion of peace, but was maintained till 1791. The whole community was liable to it, according to a classification which reposed upon status and not upon wealth. There were 22 classes, in the first of which stood the Dauphin alone, assessed at 2000 *livres*; in class 2, came the Princes of the Blood, assessed at 1500; at the bottom of the scale, labourers figured at 40, 30, 10, 3 *livres*, or even at 20 *sols*. The clergy had compounded in 1695, and again in 1701, and had finally in 1709 agreed to pay 24 millions down, thus obtaining exemption till 1789. The *don gratuit*, or free gift accorded to the King by the clergy, was revised by them every five years. In its permanent form it dated from the Conference of Poissy, 1561, when it was fixed for six years at 1,600,000 *livres*; but special grants were added on special occasions. Efforts to make the contribution compulsory were successfully opposed by the clergy; and, in return for their *don gratuit*, they claimed exemption from new taxes like the *capitation* and the *vingtième*. In 1755 the *don gratuit* was settled at 16 millions, at which figure it stood unaltered until its abolition. The repartition of the burden was left to the clergy themselves. In 1758 a *don gratuit* was imposed upon the cities and towns of France for six years, but successive renewals continued it to the end of the century. The *pays d'états* and

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several towns made an annual subscription for *capitation* as in the case of the *taille*. The division into classes was made by the Intendants; but, in spite of apparent equality, the Commons were assessed strictly (the *taille* serving as a guide), while the Nobles were rated according to their personal declarations. They obtained, under various pretexts, indulgences and exemptions to such an extent that they were estimated to pay only one-eighth of their fair contribution, while the peasantry contributed eight times their equitable quota. The *capitation* yielded 21½ millions of *livres* in 1695, and upwards of 56 millions in 1789.

The *vingtième* — a kind of tithe, theoretically payable upon all property, real or personal — was first imposed by Desmarets in 1710, abolished in 1717, renewed 1733 to 1737, and again from 1741 to 1749. In 1749 it was made permanent and fixed at the rate of one *vingtième* and two *sols* the *livre*. A second *vingtième* was imposed in 1756, and in 1760 two *vingtièmes* and two *sols* a *livre*, making roughly one-sixth of all income. In this case also the *pays d'états* arranged for a fixed annual subscription; and certain towns and corporations either subscribed or redeemed the tax on easy terms. The clergy, as already explained, were not separately assessed. The privileged classes successfully exerted their social influence to evade the strict assessment to which they were legally liable; and Calonne declared that the total yield of the tax was only half the proper amount. The extent to which personal property escaped may be gauged from the fact that in 1785 only 2½ millions were derived from personal as against 74 millions from real property.

The *aides* were indirect taxes of the nature of excise duties levied chiefly upon alcohol, but also upon gold and silver ware, steel, iron, cards, paper, starch, etc. Various localities had purchased exemption in whole or in part, causing innumerable differences in the various parts of the kingdom.

The *traites* or customs, etymologically transit dues, were tolls levied usually for the benefit of municipal or ecclesiastical corporations, or of nobles, upon goods passing across the borders of their properties. The Baron de Comeré who published in 1789 a treatise on finance, prepared a map showing the intricate divisions and subdivisions of France for the purpose of customs and excise duties, but declared it impossible to indicate the multiplicity and complexity of the barriers where transit dues were collected. It would seem indeed that not even the government possessed any complete record of them. They were in effect internal customs, requiring an army of collectors, and seriously fettered the interior commerce of the country. Colbert had endeavoured to secure uniformity and order by a general tariff; but the *pays d'états*, jealous of their privilege of voting their own assessments, resisted him so effectually that he was unable to do more than make three great divisions for government purposes: (i) the five great farms (twelve Provinces mainly around Paris and between the Somme and the Loire); (ii) the

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"foreign" Provinces—Britanny, Auvergne, the south of France, Franche Comté, and Flanders; (iii) the places "reputed foreign"— Alsace, Lorraine, Metz, Verdun, Avignon, Marseilles, Dunkirk, Bayonne, and L'Orient. Within these several districts there were no government internal customs, but private and municipal tolls were numbered by thousands. A boat from Languedoc to Paris laden with wine lost a fortnight in paying some forty tolls.

Upon various smaller taxes, such as stamps, posts, tobacco, powder and saltpetre, and import dues, it is unnecessary to enlarge. The *gabelle*, or salt tax, deserves fuller consideration. The government monopoly in salt was stringently enforced. The country was divided into six districts — the *grandes gabelles*, *petites gabelles*, *salines*, the *pays rédimés*, the *provinces franches*, and the *pays de quart bouillon*. The historical reasons for these distinctions must be sought elsewhere. Certain places and persons were *franc-salé*, or exempt. The price of salt varied in different districts from 50 *sols* to 60 *livres* at the same time. Every individual over eight years of age was supposed to consume a minimum quantity of salt (*sel de devoir*), about $2\frac{3}{4}$ *litres* a year; and (unless privileged) was taxed accordingly. Contraband was rife; 50,000 troops and agents were employed to suppress it. It was forbidden to use sea water for cooking or manufactures, to feed cattle in the salt marshes, or to drink at salt springs. Meat and cheeses could not be preserved for lack of salt; and the breeding of cattle was hindered. In 1783 there were 4000 domiciliary seizures; 2500 men, 2000 women, 6600 children were arrested. Out of 6000 criminals at the galleys, one-third were convicted smugglers. The salt tax yielded some 60 millions; the cost of collection was from 18 to 20 millions.[1]

Over and above these contributions, the people paid ecclesiastical tithes, local taxes (*octroi*, etc., in which the government sometimes shared), and feudal dues to their *seigneurs*, and contributed personal service or forced labour (*corvées*) upon public works; for example, making and mending the roads, conveying troops, stores, etc. They also served in the militia to the number of 60,000 — selected annually by lot — and were burdened with billeting or the gratuitous lodging of soldiers. Each district was compelled to contribute its contingent to the militia, and substitutes were not allowed for fear of hindering enlistment for the standing army. Those liable to service sometimes fled to the mountains or the woods, and were hunted down by their neighbours who had no desire to serve in their stead. The privileged classes and their servants were exempt.

The total burden of taxation might have been easily borne had it been fairly distributed. Forbonnais, one of the ablest and best-informed writers on French finance, wrote in 1758, "France would be too rich if the taxes were equitably apportioned." But the wealthiest classes, by

[1] For a map of the districts of *gabelles* see Necker's *Compte Rendu*, 1781.

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the purchase of official posts or otherwise, joined the ranks of the privi leged, and secured complete or partial exemption. The practice of farming the indirect taxes to the highest bidder encouraged revolting harshness in collection. In his celebrated anonymous *Theory of Taxation*, 1760, the elder Mirabeau, addressing the King, informs him that he has seen a tax-gathering bailiff cut off the hand of a woman who clung to her cooking utensils when distraint was made upon her effects. Collectors were appointed by a system of rotation, under which two or three persons each collected a year's taxes in turn. This primitive device for keeping the accounts of each year's receipts distinct occasionally resulted in conflicting claims upon a taxpayer in arrear for the current taxes, last year's taxes, and the taxes of the year before. Competing among themselves, the several collectors showed no consideration for the public; and it was left to Necker to exempt the bed and clothing of unfortunate debtors from distraint for taxes. Forcible resistance to arrest or to domiciliary visits was met with the extremity of armed violence. Adam Smith, with unusual warmth, says: "Those who consider the blood of the people as nothing, in comparison with the revenue of the prince, may, perhaps, approve of this method of levying taxes."

The practice of farming out a particular tax is of great antiquity. In 1697 the indirect taxes were leased collectively to a body of financiers, sixty in number, thenceforward known as the Farmers-general. They were appointed by the King for six years and paid an agreed sum in advance year by year. The leases were awarded by Court favour and led to much intrigue and corruption, always at the ultimate expense of the public. The farmer made large profits. "He levies," says Adam Smith (referring to salt and tobacco), "two exorbitant profits upon the people: the profit of the farmer and the still more exorbitant one of the monopolist." In 1785 a government analysis disclosed 5 lbs. of salt and 25 lbs. of surplus water to 100 lbs. of tobacco, a fraud of 23 per cent. in a farm yielding 30 millions of *livres*. It was on the charge of this fraud that the farmers-general were guillotined during the Revolution. At a dinner party at Voltaire's the exploits of famous robbers were being related. Pressed for a story in turn, Voltaire began, "There was once upon a time a farmer-general," and, after some hesitation, "That is all!" Some of the farmers were public-spirited and upright men. Beaujon founded a hospital. Helvétius, Dupin, and Lavoisier, bear honoured names in literature and science. But the system, convenient as it was to a government anxious rather for the moment than the future, deserves the stigma of Adam Smith as "wasteful and expensive." The *ferme générale* produced 37 millions *livres* in 1697, 64 in 1743, 90 in 1763, 112 in 1786, and 180 in 1789.

The banking system of the country was so imperfect that the remittance of large sums from place to place was slow, troublesome, expensive, and almost dangerous. On this account collectors of taxes deducted from

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the revenue the cost of collection and defrayed local charges out of the funds in their hands. The net receipts alone found their way into the exchequer; the *pays d'états* contributed only their surplus; and the total contributions of the people are therefore hardly discoverable. One example will illustrate this. Necker, in his *Compte Rendu* of 1781, returns the receipts from the *fermes générales unies* at 48,427,000 *livres*. They amounted in fact to 126,000,000, out of which were paid the salaries of the *Parlement* of Paris, the *Chambre des Comptes*, the *Cour des Aides*, part of the interest on public debt, tithes, etc., in all 77,573,000 *livres*. Twelve audit offices received the voucher of their several districts; but no central authority resumed them as a whole. The Royal Council added the accounts together and ordered the local *Chambres des Comptes* to pass them without waiting for further examination; and the summary was then signed by the King, leaving a blank for the total, to admit of subsequent corrections. *Acquits de comptant*, or orders upon the Treasury, emanating from the King or the Controller-General, without specifying any service, were not sent to the *Chambre des Comptes*. Thus at least one-sixth of the expenditure entirely escaped audit. Other expenses might, for political reasons, be passed for audit by the *Conseil d'État*, or by the *Bureau des Finances*. The controllers or auditors, who purchased their offices, were ordered to arrange with the local revenue officers (whose accounts they checked) for the payments due to them. Such a regulation was highly dangerous to the scrupulous conduct of their business; and it is impossible to view without suspicion discrepancies which will now never be cleared up. The *acquits de comptant* received a great extension under Madame de Pompadour. They increased from some 20 to 30 millions in 1739 to 117 millions in 1759.

The annual ledger was disturbed by anticipations and repayments to such an extent that the accounts of a single year were frequently not closed for ten or twelve years. In 1789 the anticipations upon future budgets had risen to 282 millions of *livres*, or, according to the later statement of Cambon, to 325 millions. The Controller-General might indeed form an estimate of the normal revenue for the coming year; but his estimate of expenditure was liable to serious disturbance from capricious expenditure beyond his control. The *acquits de comptant* were increasingly abused; and the creations of pensions without adequate justification became a scandal of the first magnitude. The publication of the *Livre Rouge*, or register of pensions, bound in red, added fuel to the flame of the Revolution. In April, 1787, Calonne informed the Assembly of Notables that the pension list amounted to a total of 16 millions of *livres*. In 1790 Camus declared the true amount to be over 51 millions. Vouchers for payment were not always forthcoming. In some instances the pensions were charged upon revenue. The mistress of a minister received 12,000 *livres* a year on the contract for the bread of galley slaves. Economies were effected in the cost of public

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lighting by extinguishing lamps upon moonlight nights, and so-called "pensions on the moon" were accorded out of the saving. When public debts were created, fictitious creditors were entered as subscribers, and thus became virtual pensioners. In 1770 the State debt included some 40 or 50 millions of imaginary capital on this account. One Ducrest, a barber, figured in the Red Book for a pension of 1700 *livres* as sometime hairdresser to a daughter of the Comte d'Artois who died as an infant before she had hair to dress. During the eight years 1779 to 1787, the pensions charged in the *Livre Rouge*, including *acquits au porteur* and *acquits de comptant*, amounted to 858,824,250 *livres*.

The deficit increased from year to year. Bankruptcies, or repudiations of part of the national obligations, occurred in 1715, 1721, 1726, 1759, 1770. A Controller-General with a depleted exchequer raised money how and when he could. Money was coined lighter, with the result that foreign-made coin of the new weight crept into circulation to an amount estimated by Forbonnais at three hundred millions of *livres*. The payment of expenses, and even of interest on debt, was postponed to the following year; moneys were borrowed or anticipated upon future budgets; loans were raised at usurious rates; unnecessary offices were created and sold, which amounted to borrowing upon annuities; and in this manner a large floating debt was kept on foot until the issue of a new loan enabled the government to consolidate a portion of it with the ever-increasing public debt. Such a course made rapidly for financial ruin. The American War of Independence cost the French nation from 1000 to 1200 millions. Cambon states the amount at 1500 millions. No less than 220 millions were still due on this account in 1788 (Calonne), and 100 millions in 1784 (Necker). In their anxiety to do a mischief to England the advisers of Louis XVI precipitated the ruin of the French monarchy—as well by the example of American Independence, which they helped to bring about, as by their mortal blow at the finances of the struggling government.

Economy in administration, a peaceful policy, a rigid and businesslike control of public expenditure, a clear and ordered system of public accounts, might have alleviated the difficulty. These were the expedients of Necker; but no permanent solution of the problem was possible without subjecting the privileged classes to their fair share of taxation, and to this their assent could not be obtained. Beyond this, the leaven of political liberty and the increasingly critical attitude of the public made it inevitable that the taxpayer should be admitted to a share in the direction of financial policy. The *Parlement* of Paris, a body of salaried judges who purchased their appointments, declared itself incompetent to grant permanent taxes; but at the same time demanded the convocation of the States General, in order "that the nation might be instructed in the state of its public finances" before further taxes were conceded. The wordy warfare of eighteen months between

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Calonne and Necker as to the accuracy of Necker's statement of finance sufficiently illustrates the shadowy uncertainty which hung over financial administration. The publication, by royal permission, of the *Compte Rendu* of Necker in 1781 is an event of the first importance in the history of French finance. From the time of Richelieu it had been the policy of government to discourage and even to punish the public discussion of national finance.

Necker's account was an estimate of the probable ordinary budget of the year, excluding war expenditure and other "extraordinary" charges. He (improperly) includes the cash balance in the Treasury as income of the year, and gives no account of the debt — a large part of which was floating or unfunded. Calonne based his criticism upon it in the main upon *comptes effectifs*, or figures of actual expenditure as certified by the *Chambre des Comptes*; but these figures were in themselves exceedingly imperfect for the reasons already given, and much of the controversy turned upon the question whether floating debt and terminable annuities were to be regarded as permanent debt or as current expenditure. It will readily be seen that such simple questions as what were the receipts and the expenses of government, and the amount of the national debt, year by year, are not now susceptible of accurate answer: it may indeed be doubted whether an accurate answer could ever have been given. In 1788 there appeared at Lausanne a collection of the public accounts of France from 1758 to 1787, usually attributed to Mathon de la Cour. These were prepared from the official papers of the Abbé Terray, of Turgot, and of Necker, and showed for the year 1774 expenses of 234 millions, receipts 207 millions, to which Calonne added 12½ millions of extraordinary expenses, chiefly connected with the war. Apparently some 165 millions of expenses over and above these amounts were paid out of gross revenue. In 1775, under Turgot, the expenses are estimated at 414½ millions, the receipts at 377¼, and the permanent debt charge at 235¼ millions. In 1776, under Clugny, the expenses were 402½ millions, the receipts 378½, while expenses charged upon future budgets amount to 50½ millions. Calonne places the deficiency in this year at upwards of 37 millions. In 1784 Calonne sold to Burgundy the privilege of exemption from *aides*; and it is estimated that, out of the total borrowing of 1647 millions between 1776 and 1786, Calonne alone borrowed 650 millions and a half, at an annual cost of 45 and a half millions, in 41 months of peace. In 1786 the expenses amounted to 593 and a half millions, the receipts to 412 and a quarter millions. In 1787 the expenses exceeded 599 millions, while the receipts were estimated at 474 millions, though Brienne admitted a deficit of 140 millions and anticipations exceeding twice that amount. According to Bailly, the nation contributed in 1786 upwards of 880 millions, of which 558 went to the government, 41½ to the Provinces, and 280½ to private individuals and communities. Again, according to Bailly, the *état au vrai*, based upon

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actual receipts and expenditure and eliminating anticipations and repayments, showed the receipts of the Treasury at 364 millions, the expenses at 442,350,000. There were, however, in addition, 27,313,000 of pensions and 71,932,000 of arrears, making the total real deficit of 1785 177,640,000 *livres*. In 1789 the true debt amounted to 4,467,478,000, with a charge for interest of 236,150,000. On the evening of April 30, 1789, there were in the Treasury 58,589,079 *livres*: 80 millions more were due to the Treasury, and 90 millions of anticipations had been consumed in advance upon the receipts of 1790, with a further 172 millions upon the last eight months of 1789.

These figures sufficiently show the desperate financial position of the French monarchy on the eve of the Revolution — chronic deficit, increasing public debt, increasing pressure upon the taxpayers, resulting in increasing exasperation, intensified by the unfairness of exemption. Without further resources the King was hopeless. Before granting further resources, the people demanded guarantees against arbitrary fiscal oppression by large extensions of political power. The struggle to obtain this power and the opposition to its concession are the first chapter in the French Revolution.

We are now in a position to examine the *Compte Rendu* of 1788, the last presented to the King before the convocation of the States General. It was prepared by Lambert, Controller-General under Loménie de Brienne, and is summarised as follows:

	livres
Receipts:	
Ordinary (gross) receipts	472,415,549
Extraordinary receipts	168,130,500
Total	640,546,049
Expenses:	
1. Ordinary expenses and charges to be paid out of revenue	240,420,720
2. Extraordinary expenses and charges to be paid out of revenue	6,656,285
3. Repayments and charges to be paid out of revenue	13,629,567
4. Ordinary expenses to be paid out of the Exchequer	286,834,369
5. Extraordinary " " " " " "	22,739,300
6. Repayments due at fixed dates	62,872,800
Total	633,153,041

At the first blush it might appear that there is here an estimated surplus revenue of 7,393,008 *livres*. In reality there is a deficit of 160,737,492 *livres*. The ordinary expenses (items 1 and 4) amount to 527,255,089, the ordinary receipts to 472,415,549 — a deficit of 54,839,540 *livres* on the normal budget. But if we add the extraordinary expenses (items 2 and 5) and the repayment of loans due

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in the year (items 3 and 6), the total becomes 160,737,492. It is converted into a surplus by treating as "receipts" a number of miscellaneous loans and sales amounting to 154,327,500 *livres* and a small balance of miscellaneous windfalls, 13,803,000. With this exception of less than 14 millions the whole of the extraordinary receipts are borrowings in one form or another. This estimate of extraordinary receipts was not realised. The cost of raising the loans is not accounted for. An enormous deficit is virtually treated as if it were revenue!

The gross receipts, in greater detail, are as follows:

		livres	*livres*
1.	*Fermes générales:*		
	Gabelles	58,560,000	
	Tobacco	27,000,000	
	Entrées (*Octroi*, etc.) of Paris	30,000,000	
	Traites	28,440,000	
	Sundry receipts	6,106,875	
			150,106,875
2.	General receipts (direct taxes), (*tailles*, *capitation*, *vingtièmes*, etc.)		156,478,010
3.	*Régie générale* (*aides*, etc.)		51,940,000
4.	*Domaine*		51,240,000
5.	Casual revenue		5,665,000
6.	Post-office		10,800,000
7.	Mailship service		1,100,000
8.	Tolls at Sceaux and Poissy		630,000
9.	Subscription for duties of maritime Flanders		800,000
10.	Gunpowder		500,000
11.	Royal lottery		9,860,000
12.	*Vingtième* (subscribed for)		574,700
13.	Mint		533,774
14.	Assay, etc.		120,000
15.	Tithe (on Government salaries and pensions)		966,751
16.	*États* of Languedoc		8,584,824
17.	" " Britanny		6,115,400
18.	" " Bourgogne		3,201,508
19.	" " Provence		1,997,031
20.	General receipts, Languedoc and Roussillon		1,210,426
21.	" " Britanny		496,060
22.	" " Bresse, Bugey, and Gex		938,128
23.	" " Provence and locality around		895,431
24.	" " Pau, Bayonne, and Foix		1,260,079
25.	Due from the United States of America		1,600,000
26.	Forges of La Chaussade		80,000
27.	Due from towns for fortifications		561,552
28.	Miscellaneous receipts		4,160,000
29.	*Don gratuit* of the clergy; old debts, etc.		—
		Total	472,415,549

Of this total 211,708,977 *livres* alone were receivable into the exchequer. The sum paid out of item 1 for cost of collection, charges

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assigned, etc., amounted to 132,305,658 *livres*: out of item 2, 43,134,100; item 3, 40,828,021; item 4, 14,017,550. Item 16 was insufficient by 2,280,787 *livres* to meet the expenses charged for the year upon the financial agents in Languedoc. The nett receipt under item 17 is 3,073,421; item 18, 21,038 only. The only receipts which are nett as well as gross are 10, 12, 15, 25, 26, and 27. The items 6, 7, 8, and 14 are farmed. Item 25 represents a sum due from the United States in respect of French assistance during the War of Independence. Of the ordinary expenses about 100¼ millions are for the War Department, 45 millions for the Navy, 9 millions for Foreign Affairs, nearly 32 millions for the Household of the King and the royal family, or upwards of 186 millions out of a total of 286. The last item had been very considerably cut down. Reductions of 36,266,837 *livres* had been made in the total estimate of expenses, but such reductions are not necessarily to be regarded as ultimate economies.

In spite of the numerous reforms of Turgot and of Necker the finances of France on the eve of the Revolution illustrate every possible defect. The government did not pay its way. With gross receipts of 472 millions it had an annual charge of one-half (or upwards of 236 millions) for debt alone; and the debt was ever growing. A very small portion of it was productive of revenue. State railways, State telegraphs, and other modern assets to be set against public debts, did not exist. Practically the whole debt was the heritage of past misgovernment hung like a millstone around the neck of the nation. Delays in the payment of interest, the forced reduction of the rate of interest in violation of public faith, the risk of total repudiation, alarmed the wealthier classes of the *bourgeois*, the merchants, the financiers, and the new nobility, who were at once the government's chief creditors and its principal critics. The superior credit of England would have enabled her in case of war to raise easily and rapidly a large war loan, while France would have been at the mercy of her enemies. Her treasury empty, her credit exhausted, her resources anticipated in advance, she could hardly hope to hold her place as a great nation, if she continued to descend the slope of insolvency. After payment of the debt charge her revenues fell hopelessly short of the minimum requirements of the public service; and the most drastic economy would only have succeeded in retarding the final crash. The direct taxes pressed so heavily upon the *tiers état* that an increase was not to be thought of. Indirect taxes might, perhaps, by the operation of what is known as "the elasticity of the exchequer," have yielded an even higher return if they had been reduced. It is almost certain that an increase in these taxes would have failed to produce a higher revenue. The form of the taxes was odious to such a degree that in his *Compte Rendu au Roi* in 1781 Necker published his opinion of the *gabelle* in terms like these: "One universal cry rises, so to speak, against this tax. Thousands of men, ceaselessly attracted by the bait of an easy profit, devote themselves constantly to the illegal commerce of smuggling

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salt. Agriculture is abandoned for a career promising greater and quicker returns. Children under their parents' eyes grow up in forgetfulness of public probity; and thus, by a mere fiscal arrangement, is prepared a generation of depraved humanity. The evil resulting from this school of immorality is incalculable." The taxes took immensely more from the pockets of the people than found its way into the Treasury. Some of the taxes, indeed, hardly paid for the cost of collection. The apprehension of the *taillable* as to the amount of his assessment, with its attendant fatalism, broke his spirit and numbed his energies. Certainty, the great safeguard of the taxpayer, was wanting. Economy and efficiency were alike lacking in the mode of collection, and in the checking and ordering of the public accounts. Finally, equality, the first great requisite of taxation, was openly flouted. It was requisite that the people as a whole should shoulder the burden, sweep away local privilege and personal exemptions, unify the fiscal arrangements of the country, and decide for itself how best to support the weight of the national engagements. One of Necker's numerous adversaries declared that local inequalities were rather apparent than real, and that where the *gabelle* was lightest the *taille* was heaviest. This assertion was true only in part. So far as it was true it lessened the difficulty which would have been encountered in smoothing out the differences of taxation.

The calculations of Taine, based upon the reports of the provincial assemblies from 1778 to 1787, show an average contribution of each *taillable* in respect of direct taxation (*taille*, *capitation*, *vingtième*, etc.), amounting to 53 fr. 15 c. for each 100 fr. of income assessed to *taille*. Over and above this the tithe is 14 fr. 28 c. The feudal dues are estimated at the same sum. The total was 81 fr. 71 c. on each 100 fr. of nett revenue; and out of the balance of 18 fr. 29. c. there still remained to be paid the *aides*, *gabelle*, etc. As a set-off, the peasant received the services of the clergy, and even his *seigneur* rendered him some return. The monopoly of the lord's mill, oven, market, etc., was a burden; but it dated from the time when the lord alone possessed capital enough to construct the mill; and his fees for milling may thus be regarded as an agreed bargain. But for the most part the absentee *seigneur* did little or nothing for the peasant. His duties of protection, succour, and charity, had fallen into disuse. The dues were often petty in amount, but on that account all the more irritating, owing to the time and trouble wasted in paying them long after their *raison d'être* had ceased to be apparent. The *lods et ventes* were a more serious charge, amounting usually to one-sixth of the purchase-money, but sometimes one-fifth or one-fourth, upon the sale of land, or a lease for more than nine years. Under such weights as these the very springs of industry were broken. The active and industrious section of the community yielded up to its governors the capital which would have made its labours vastly more productive to the general well-being. Fiscal burdens were ruining alike the government and the people.

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CHAPTER IV

LOUIS XVI

LOUIS, third son of the Dauphin and grandson of Louis XV, was born on August 23, 1754, and was therefore in his twentieth year when he succeeded to the throne on May 10, 1774. In 1770 he had married Marie-Antoinette, youngest daughter of Maria Theresa, then fourteen years old. This marriage had been intended to strengthen the alliance between the Houses of Bourbon and Habsburg, as were likewise the marriage of Ferdinand of Naples with the Archduchess Maria Caroline, and the marriage of Ferdinand of Parma with the Archduchess Maria Amalia.

In person Louis was large and inclined to corpulence, with little grace of bearing and with undistinguished features. His intelligence was by no means contemptible. Although his education had been grossly neglected, he was thoughtful, liked reading, and possessed a degree of historical and geographical knowledge unusual among kings. His character presented an amiable contrast to that of Louis XV. He revolted against the vices of the Court in which he grew up; he took a serious view of his duty, was religious without fanatical intolerance, and tried to live in some accord with his profession of faith. He wished to improve the condition of the people, practised economy in his personal expenses, and always instinctively preferred upright men for ministers. Yet, with all these good qualities, Louis was unfit to be an autocrat, and doubly unfit to govern France on the eve of a revolution. Shy and unsocial, he spent valuable time in trifling mechanical pursuits or in the hunting-field, where he used to fatigue himself so much that he would afterwards fall asleep in Council when grave business was under discussion. He was unequal to prolonged toil or daring resolution, and so self-distrustful as to be readily swayed this way or that by those whom he liked or who had frequent access to his company. His very virtues thus became a snare, for, had he been a worse husband, he would have been less influenced by that unwise counsellor, his Queen. His lack of will was phenomenal. When you can keep together a number of oiled ivory balls, said the Comte de Provence, you may do

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something with the King. It was thus that, when Louis had set foot on the path of reform, he was again and again diverted by sinister influences, or retreated before opposition which had no strength but in his own weakness. So, when the Revolution began, he could resolve on no policy and would take no decisive measure, but drifted on the current of circumstance. Sometimes, indeed, he was spurred into doing just enough to awaken suspicion, but only to sink back into the same lethargy and lose whatever advantage continuous action might have gained. Even at the last, when power was gone and it was only a question of saving life and liberty, the same failings wrought his destruction. In another age and country Louis might have proved an excellent constitutional King; but where fate had placed him he was no more than an inglorious victim.

His Queen, for very different reasons, was equally unsuited to her position. She began with the grave disadvantage of representing the Austrian alliance, which was unpopular both as a departure from French tradition and as the cause of many misfortunes to France. In the Seven Years' War France had lost her empire in India and America; her navy had been destroyed, her military renown had been tarnished, her finances had been ruined. England and Prussia, the authors of these calamities, were less detested than the Austrian ally for whom they had been endured. From the first arrival of Marie-Antoinette there was laid up against her a fund of grudge and suspicion, and in after years nothing was too bad to be believed of the Austrian woman. She was unfortunate in her education, for the Court of Vienna was singularly indifferent to intellectual interests, and the Archduchesses were brought up with little culture. Maria Theresa has testified to her own neglect of her daughter, who could not write a good letter, had no taste for reading, and did not even possess any of the lighter accomplishments. She was still more unfortunate in being thrown, at the age of fourteen, into a Court where she had scarcely a friend and where no good was to be learnt. The heavy, listless youth to whom she was married did nothing to gain her affection or respect. The old King, though well disposed towards her, was too slothful a voluptuary to think of governing his household. She fell under the influence of his daughters, three maiden ladies of feeble intelligence, gave herself up to childish amusements and unsuitable companions, and made no serious effort to understand French character or conciliate French opinion.

As she grew up, Marie-Antoinette shook off this degrading dependence, and when children were born to her she gained ascendancy over the mind of her husband. She remained, however, a thoughtless woman, frank to indiscretion, haughty towards those whom she disliked, little apt to take good advice, and headstrong in all her actions. She was capable of very warm friendship; but her bosom friends, such as the Polignacs and the Princess of Lamballe, had neither the sense nor the

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strength of character to supply her deficiencies. She was compassionate to distress when it came before her in bodily form; but she had not enough reach of mind to grasp the amount of suffering caused by reckless and wasteful government. In affairs of State she always took the personal view, never the statesman's. For these reasons her interference in public affairs was often harmful, and brought upon her odium even out of proportion to the harm. She displayed noble qualities of courage and devotion in the closing period of her life; but even then she gave no proof of that talent for affairs which her mother had possessed in so eminent a degree.

What the Queen lacked as an adviser Louis could not hope to find among his nearest relatives. His next brother, the Comte de Provence, though clever, was at this time a frivolous trifler, despising the King who disliked him, and a bitter personal enemy of the Queen. The Comte d'Artois, the youngest of the brothers, in after life an impenetrable bigot and dullard, now a mere fop and voluptuary, was on better terms with the Queen; but his influence, such as it was, tended to the detriment of the King and the kingdom. Philip, Duc de Chartres, afterwards Duc d'Orléans, the King's cousin, was as yet remarked only for his dissolute manner of life. At a later period he became ambitious, showed a peculiar enmity to the Queen, and finally set himself up under the thinnest disguise as a rival to the King.

It is no longer necessary for the historian to insist that the failings of Louis, his Queen, and his kinsman, were not principal causes of the Revolution impending over France. The Revolution arose from the fact that the French people had entirely outgrown its institutions and must find new ones if its growth were not to cease. But the form which that Revolution should take was in large measure determined by the character of the man whom birth had invested with supreme authority, and by the personal influences to which he was exposed. A bold and able King, or even a King capable of holding firmly by a minister of genius, might have guided the course of events, might have made himself powerful by administrative reform, and popular by sacrificing the privileged orders, and might have prolonged the life of the monarchy while saving France from ten years of unutterable confusion. But, though Louis often saw what was right, he could not conceive or execute a policy; and, although he tried to choose honest and capable servants, he could not support them against noisy opposition. From time to time he would essay reform, abandon it, and take it up again only to let it fall, until he had taught even the most ignorant that the state of France was deplorable, but that they must not expect from the King any adequate improvement. No bigot, no tyrant, no shameless debauchee, ever educated his people to revolt more effectively than this sensible, well-meaning, and kindly King.

The mere accession of a young and amiable pair in place of a

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widowed old profligate naturally called forth a loyal emotion, which was strengthened by the first events of the new reign. Louis found the public impatient for a change in the conduct of affairs, which he was quite willing to make. Louis XV had done nothing since the close of the Seven Years' War to efface the memory of its disasters or to regain the good-will of the nation. His latest advisers, the Duc d'Aiguillon, who bore a very bad character, the Abbé Terray, who as Controller-General had been the author of a fresh bankruptcy, and Maupeou, who as Chancellor had abolished the *Parlements* and replaced them with a new system of superior Courts, were all exceedingly unpopular. The King disliked these men and resolved to dismiss them, but without recalling Choiseul, whom they had driven from power, for Louis was jealous at least of the semblance of authority and did not mean to give himself a prime minister. He chose for first Minister the Comte de Maurepas. It was an unfortunate choice, for the sole merit of Maurepas was to have been brought into disgrace with the late King by Madame de Pompadour; and age had made him feeble without making him serious. With Maurepas Louis called to office Miroménil as Keeper of the Seals, Vergennes as Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Comte de St Germain as Minister for War, and Turgot as Minister of the Navy. Somewhat later Turgot became Controller-General, and Sartines took over the navy. Later still Malesherbes was named Minister of the King's Household. All these ministers were respectable, and three of them were men of eminent worth.

The first appointments made by Louis were therefore welcomed by the best opinion in France. He gained still louder applause by renouncing the so-called "gift of joyous accession" and "the girdle of the Queen," commonly levied when a new sovereign came to the throne, and by promising in the edict of renunciation that henceforward frugality should prevail in the public expenditure and the claims of the public creditor should be fully satisfied. His intention in making this sacrifice was good, but its wisdom may be questioned. So long as there was a deficit the Treasury should not have parted with any source of revenue; and until the finances could be reformed as a whole it would have been better not to raise sanguine expectations. The recall of the *Parlements* and the suppression of the new Courts before the end of 1774 were also popular and also unwise. The *Parlements* had been but a feeble check upon tyranny; and their members, as lawyers, as privileged persons, and as traditional carpers at the royal will, were enemies of all comprehensive reform. They were barely reinstated when they began to show their mischievous temper; and they must share with the Queen and the courtiers the blame of having defeated Turgot's beneficent designs. Yet Louis had perhaps no alternative. For it was scarcely possible to maintain the suppression of the *Parlements* when reversing his predecessor's policy in other things; and public opinion, which in France

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had almost become a match for the power of the Crown, insisted on their restoration.

One capital point Louis had secured. He had found the Controller-General best fitted to reform the finances. This was now the all-essential reform. If it were once achieved the Crown would have gained an independence and a popularity which would render all subsequent reforms easy by comparison.

Turgot was forty-seven years of age. He came of a family long established in Normandy and respectable, though not noble. His father had held the office of Provost of the Merchants of Paris, the highest in the old municipal constitution of Paris. As the youngest of three brothers, of whom one was destined for the army and another for the law, Turgot was destined to take holy orders. He distinguished himself at the College of the Sorbonne, but he came to doubt the doctrines of the Catholic Church; and, although his talent and character gave promise of high preferment, he was not one of those whom either the prospect of wealth and power or the more insidious temptation of doing good under false pretences could move to palter with his own integrity. As soon as his father's death set him free, he gave up his studies for the Church and entered the public service. In 1761 he became Intendant of the Limousin, a post which he held for thirteen years, and in which he gave a fine example of the good that might have been accomplished in France by skilful and humane administration. From these duties he was called to take a place, and presently the most important place, in the government. Although his practical experience was considerable, the cast of his mind was essentially speculative. He had reflected long and deeply upon political and economic subjects and had come to conclusions in most respects resembling those of the physiocratic school. Like them he was no enemy of the royal authority. On the contrary, he thought that a monarch could have no interest in making bad laws and was a better agent of reform than popular assemblies, which decide according to their prejudices and so make abuses perpetual. Like the Physiocrats he considered that agriculture was the only industry which produced a real surplus, and that all taxes must in the last resort come out of agricultural produce, and therefore thought a single tax upon land the best way of raising a revenue and all indirect taxation mischievous. Like them he believed absolute freedom of production and distribution to be the best, indeed the only means of ensuring the public welfare. But he would not proclaim himself a Physiocrat, for the Physiocrats were a sect, and he regarded the sectarian spirit as mischievous.

He was one of the simplest and most disinterested of men. His tastes and habits were studious, and it was only the hope of doing good which led him to accept office. With a deep pity for the poor and oppressed he joined a masculine sense of justice. In all his reforms he was careful that none should suffer undeservedly and that all legal

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rights should be recognised. As a statesman he had some failings. His zeal led him to attempt too much, and his systematic turn of mind disqualified him for managing men. Ignorance of the low ways of the world left him open to cabal and intrigue. A cold and self-contained manner chilled the ardour of friends and deepened the ill-will of enemies. He studied perfection more than despatch. He spent infinite pains upon the preambles to the edicts which Louis put forth at his suggestion. They are admirable justifications of his policy, but we may doubt whether they had on the public any effect proportioned to his labour. Sometimes their language was positively indiscreet. The abuses which he attacked were flagrant enough to draw the severest condemnation from a good and wise man; but a Minister of the Crown, speaking in his public character, was scarcely justified in denunciations so vehement as some that may be found in these preambles. He hoped, doubtless, to make the return to evil impossible. He only hastened the descent to revolution.

In a very able letter addressed to the King on taking office Turgot explained the principles on which he should feel bound to act. They were: — No bankruptcy, no new taxes, no loans. The deficit was to be made good by rigorous thrift. He warned the King that frugality would not be easy, and that he expected to bear all the odium of it without assistance. He gained the King's consent to a new rule that the heads of the different departments should incur no expense without consulting the Controller-General, and that the amounts appropriated to the different services should never be exceeded. He suppressed the so-called *ordonnances de comptant*, whereby the sovereign or the Controller-General had formerly authorised disbursements which never appeared in the public accounts. He put an end to the practice of forcing favoured persons as partners upon the capitalists who farmed the indirect revenues and were thus reduced to drive a more unfavourable bargain with the Treasury. He nobly refused the commission which the Farmers-General had paid to his predecessors. Finally he abolished several thousands of useless offices in the financial administration, but with his invariable honesty took steps to reimburse to the holders what they had paid for their places.

While he thus sought to lessen the waste of public money he tried all fair means of adding to the revenue. Many rich persons had defrauded the Crown by evading or resisting inspection of their carriages and waggons at the barriers of Paris. Turgot checked this outrage by a severe ordinance, inflicting fine, imprisonment, and confiscation of the goods thus withdrawn from payment. The State had granted, on disadvantageous conditions, a monopoly for making gunpowder. Turgot availed himself of the grantee's neglect to fulfil his part, cancelled the contract, and took the monopoly into the hands of the government. He dealt in the same fashion with the monopoly of the

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Messageries for running diligences and post-carriages. He introduced new order and method into every part of the financial administration. By all these means he effected a remarkable improvement. At the untimely close of his ministry he had already reduced the deficit and the anticipations of future revenue to a small amount, and had so raised the credit of the State that he had obtained from Dutch capitalists a loan of sixty million *livres* at 4 per cent. to pay off debts which his predecessor had borrowed at thrice that rate.

This improvement was in Turgot's design the preliminary to the relief of the taxpayers, especially of the peasants. He could not yet remit taxes, but he could amend the mode of collection. He abolished the rule whereby all the inhabitants of a commune were jointly responsible for the *taille*, a rule by which many of the most substantial peasants were ruined every year. He transformed the *corvée* of transport for military purposes into a money payment. He abolished the *corvée* for making and repairing roads, and replaced it by a tax on all landed proprietors. As the revenue improved, he suppressed or reduced a number of petty indirect taxes, which tended either to make the necessaries of life dearer or to hinder commerce and industry. But the taxpayer might also be relieved by allowing him to use all his energies to enrich himself; and Turgot, we have said, believed in absolute economic freedom. He therefore restored free trade in corn. The State had hampered the corn trade in the most singular ways, by hindering merchants and farmers from keeping large stocks in hand, by forbidding exportation, and by setting a maximum price, while the *Parlements* had interfered in time of scarcity to keep corn within the limits of their respective jurisdictions. The intention had been to ensure food to the people, but the effect had been to discourage corn-growing, to bring about a large importation, and to deepen the misery of bad years. The system had long been denounced by the Physiocrats and had been partly abolished under Louis XV, only to be restored after one or two short harvests. By an edict of September, 1774, Turgot gave complete liberty to the corn trade. Again the harvest was bad, and again the cry was raised that free trade in corn meant starvation to the people. Riots ensued, and the *Parlement* of Paris protested against the Controller-General's innovations. But Turgot still had an ascendancy over Louis. The riots were put down and the *Parlement* silenced.

A little while before the end of his administration Turgot gave like freedom to the wine trade by cancelling all prohibitions against the sale in any part of the kingdom of wine grown in any other part. This reform was maintained after he had been driven from power and most of his work had been undone. But the public took more heed of another application of the same principle, the famous edict which suppressed the privileges of the gilds, leaving every man free to earn his livelihood in the way he thought best. Turgot was now preparing to remodel taxation

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on physiocratic maxims, to reduce indirect taxes and make direct taxes uniform. He was not allowed time to do this. But before he left office he gave French commerce a valuable auxiliary by founding the *Caisse d'Escompte*. Since Law's ambitious scheme had ended in ruin, France had remained without a national bank, and the very name was unpopular, although the thing would have been useful. Turgot now authorised a joint-stock association to form the *Caisse* which should discount commercial paper, receive deposits, make advances, trade in bullion, and issue notes payable on presentation. Out of a capital of 15,000,000 *livres* two-thirds were to be advanced to the Treasury and repaid in yearly instalments of 1,000,000; but this obligation was afterwards remitted.

Turgot did not limit his projects to economic reform. The scheme for a system of municipal assemblies covering the whole of France, which his friend Dupont of Nemours drew up under his instruction, although never presented to the King, remains an interesting record of his political principles. An elective assembly in each parish was to send representatives to a higher assembly in the Canton, which was in turn to send representatives to a provincial assembly, and this finally was to send representatives to a general assembly for the whole kingdom. The franchise was to be reserved to persons holding land of the value of 600 *livres* and upwards; but no account was to be taken of the distinctions between the three Estates. The assemblies were not meant to have any legislative power, for Turgot, as has been said, distrusted parliamentary legislation. The parish assembly had no other function than electing deputies to the cantonal assembly. The assemblies of higher rank were to administer and advise, concerning themselves especially with public works and the assessment of taxation. By means of these graded assemblies Turgot hoped to ensure the fullest knowledge of details to the sovereign and the ministers, to call forth such a sense of duty to the commonwealth that the government would no longer be regarded by the subject as an enemy, and to form such a bond of union between men of all three Estates as might render possible a uniform taxation irrespective of privilege. Had the experiment been tried, the assemblies might have proved very useful, but it seems unlikely that they would have kept within the limits traced by Turgot or left the Crown an unfettered right of legislation. Turgot was aware that the execution of his scheme would lessen the royal authority, although his speculative bias hindered him perhaps from noting the rise of democratic sentiment in France.

We now approach the period of Turgot's fall from power. He had done much good and had earned the applause of his wisest countrymen, but he had made many enemies, and his tenure of office rested on his ascendancy over the young, inexperienced, irresolute King. The first shock to that ascendancy was the restoration of the *Parlements*. Turgot must have feared and distrusted these bodies, but he probably thought

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it hopeless to prevent their return. His friend Malesherbes wished the King to summon the States-General, a step which would have reduced the *Parlements* to insignificance. But so long a time had passed since the meeting of the Estates that the experiment might well be considered perilous. Besides, a medieval assembly like the States-General may have seemed to Turgot likely to be as troublesome as the *Parlements*. He therefore contented himself with taking some steps to lessen their power of obstruction, and prevailed with the King to quash their resistance to the freedom of trade in corn. He then brought Malesherbes into the government as Minister of the King's Household. Malesherbes was known as an advocate of impartial taxation, religious freedom, and the abolition of *lettres de cachet*, while his high character and attainments promised new strength to the administration. But he was a sensitive, fastidious man, indifferent to power and averse from conflict, though he lived to display in far darker times the serene courage of a philosopher. The *Parlements* were still hostile. The *Parlement* of Paris ordered the suppression of a pamphlet by Voltaire in favour of Turgot and free trade in corn, and of another pamphlet by Boncerf against feudal rights. They next showed a desire to oppose the edicts for the suppression of the *corvée* and of the exclusive privileges of the gilds. Still Louis upheld his Minister. He summoned the *Parlement* to Versailles, held a "*lit de justice*" on March 12, 1776, and enforced registration of the edicts. But other enemies were gathering round Turgot. The clergy had long disapproved of his tolerance, especially of his endeavour to make the King omit that part of the coronation oath which bound him to exterminate heretics; and in September, 1775, their assembly had warned the King against such specious errors. All the interests which Turgot had alarmed, the bulk of the privileged nobles and citizens, the courtiers who disliked honesty in dispensing public money, and at their head the Queen and the King's brothers, conspired against Turgot. His well-known views as to the injurious nature of feudal rights having encouraged an agitation against them in some Provinces, the *Parlement* of Paris seized the occasion to make a decree enjoining the punctual discharge of feudal liabilities. Turgot, understanding the challenge, asked the King to cancel the decree; but the King refused. Maurepas now ceased to support Turgot, and Miroménil opposed him openly. The Queen, incensed by the recall of her friend the Comte de Guines, ambassador in London, on the joint request of Vergennes and Turgot, broke loose from the restraining influence of the Austrian ambassador, and did all she could to overturn the Controller-General. Malesherbes now resigned. "How happy you are!" said poor Louis; "why cannot I also quit my place?" But he could make no head against the clamour of almost all who had his respect or affection. The enemies of Turgot proposed an obscure person named Amelot for the place of Minister to the Household. Turgot wrote

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several letters to the King, injudicious although prophetic. "It was weakness, Sire, which laid the head of Charles I on the block." In his despite Amelot was appointed to succeed Malesherbes; the Comte de Guines was raised to ducal rank; and on May 12, 1776, Turgot received his dismissal.

So ended the power of the most illustrious Controller-General who had held the office since the death of Colbert. Turgot had made mistakes; he had tried to do too much at once; he had been wanting in tact and flexibility; and he had refused to urge the calling of the States-General. Louis was probably glad to be at peace once more; and all whose interests were contrary to the interest of the commonwealth rejoiced. But a much greater number who could not make their voice heard were sad, and the friends of progress who had hailed the young King as a reformer saw their mistake. Louis meant well, but he was unequal to his task; and the feeling slowly grew that a radical reform must be the work of the nation.

Turgot had not been the only reforming minister. Malesherbes as Minister of the Royal Household had visited the State prisons, had released a great number of prisoners detained by *lettres de cachet* on what appeared to be trivial grounds, and had been sparing beyond example in the issue of these odious warrants which he sincerely disapproved. The Comte de St Germain had tried to render the French army once more efficient. He took as his model the Prussian army, generally allowed since the Seven Years' War to be the best in Europe, and copied the Prussian system, not without pedantry. By introducing the austere subordination, the precise discharge of duty, and the elaborate drill of Prussia, he offended all ranks of the service. The common soldiers were outraged by a rule which authorised the officers to strike them with the flat of the sword, a rule accepted in Prussia, where the bulk of the privates were of servile origin, but abhorrent in France, where a sense of dignity had spread far beyond the class of gentlemen. The nobles were incensed by the suppression of several of the ornamental Household regiments, and of many agreeable sinecures. When St Germain's opponents became formidable he was abandoned by Maurepas as Turgot had been abandoned in a similar situation. He kept his place until 1777, and some of the changes which he had made were lasting; but the chief result of his labours was to further that disaffection among the troops which broke out in the early period of the Revolution.

On Turgot's dismissal the place of Controller-General was given to Clugny de Nuis, whose brief administration was notable only for the revival of most of the abuses which Turgot had destroyed. The *corvée* was again imposed on the peasants; the corn trade again put under restraint; the privileges of the gilds restored with some mitigations; even the corrupt practices in reference to the farming of the taxes were revived. Clugny's ingenuity was seen only in the establishment of a royal

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lottery; but he died in October, 1776, and it became needful to find an abler minister, for a war with England seemed probable. The French had hailed with natural joy the dispute between England and her American colonies; and when the first blood was shed in 1775, still more when the colonists proclaimed their independence in 1776, many Frenchmen felt that the time had come to avenge the loss of Canada. The colonists were aware of this disposition and tried to take advantage of it; but the French government was slow in deciding. It could not be seriously alleged that France had received any real injury from England. Louis was by nature the most peaceable of all the long Capetian line. We may safely assert that he did not consider taxation without representation sufficient ground for revolt, and that he did consider rebels as wrongdoers. Indeed Bertrand de Molleville assures us that his final resolution to attack England caused him much remorse in later years. The disasters of the Seven Years' War were still recent; and the French navy, in spite of all that had been done to strengthen it, and of probable assistance from Spain, seemed an unequal match for the navy of England. Turgot had resisted war as ruinous to his plans of financial reform, and unnecessary since the colonies even though unaided were sure to become independent. The King and Maurepas had agreed, and had resolved merely to help the colonists in secret; but the pressure of public opinion and the wish to be ready for all emergencies led to costly preparations. Maurepas therefore proposed to divide the functions of the Controller-General, assigning the administrative part to a certain Taboureau, and the purely financial business to the celebrated Necker.

Necker, so long believed by himself and the public to be a reformer equal to Turgot, was a native of Geneva, a Protestant, and a banker. He had made a large fortune — partly, gossip said, by manœuvres such as men of the world judge very leniently; and he had frequently engaged in transactions with the French Treasury. He was really an excellent man of business, who mistook himself for a genius in finance. He had expressed opinions at variance with the physiocratic doctrine in a panegyric on Colbert, crowned by the Academy. In particular he demurred to the absolute freedom of the corn trade, and had gained a prodigious success by publishing a book on the subject at the very time when the opposition to Turgot was gathering its forces. He had confirmed the reputation thus won by a series of memoirs on financial topics, submitted to the King and Maurepas. But, highly as he was esteemed and much as his help was desired, his religion debarred him from the title of Controller-General. He therefore received the style of Director of the Treasury, October 22, 1776, and after Taboureau's retirement that of Director-General of Finances, although from the first he enjoyed all the real authority of a Controller-General.

Necker was quite competent to work a good system well. Not

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only was he versed in business, frugal, and laborious, but he was upright, nay, nobly generous as a public servant, for he refused to draw his ample salary. He shared the humane spirit of the age, he was anxious to do good and still more anxious to gain honour. But Necker possessed neither the highest talent nor the highest virtue. He was not a statesman with large and coherent views; he lacked the courage to speak unpalatable truths; he never clearly perceived the change that was passing over France, or rose to the real demands of the dangerous time in which he lived. He thought too much of his own spotless reputation and too little of saving the State; he was eminently vain and self-conscious, and blended with his genuine good qualities something which we are occasionally tempted to describe as charlatanism.

Upon taking office Necker had still to meet an annual deficit of not less than 24,000,000 *livres*, and to provide for the growing expense of warlike preparation. Circumstances thus imposed an economy agreeable to his own instincts. He therefore entered on a series of reforms. The expenses of the Court, which amounted to a twelfth of the total expenditure in time of peace, were the most palpable and frivolous, and the most unpopular part of the whole, and therefore that which most obviously called for retrenchment. Necker steadily opposed grants of favours and pensions, persuaded the King to approve the suppression of many ornamental but useless offices, and introduced various economies of detail into the royal housekeeping. The Queen, who did not relish these changes, often resisted Necker, and sometimes extorted favours for her friends against his will; but on the whole he was steadily supported by the King. Necker also suppressed many of the useless offices in the financial administration and simplified its mechanism. Here too the interested parties raised an outcry, and found spokesmen in the King's brothers and the Duke of Orleans; and here too the King held firm. Necker tried to regulate the grant of pensions which had hitherto been given on no fixed or rational principles. All demands for pensions were to be reserved for consideration at a certain time in each year; a list of pensions expired and pensions conferred was to be drawn up every year for the Minister, so that he might restrict the new charges to the amount of the old ones extinguished; and steps were taken to secure punctual payment, hitherto grossly neglected. These regulations were sensible, but could not uproot the evil consequences of the absolute discretion enjoyed by the King with regard to pensions.

Necker also tried to make the fiscal system more profitable to the Crown and less onerous to the subject. The system of farming the indirect taxes was more and more clearly seen to be wasteful; but it could not be suppressed until the government had a large balance in hand, a thing hardly to be hoped in time of peace, and in time of war impossible. When the farm of the indirect taxes was renewed in 1780, Necker contented himself with taking the *aides* and some other impositions

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into the hands of the Treasury, reducing the number of the Farmers-General, making a much more advantageous bargain with those who were left, and again suppressing the unjust favours which persons at Court extorted on these occasions. He wished to amend the *gabelle* on salt, but did not venture to meet the opposition of the favoured Provinces. He suppressed that part of the *vingtièmes* which was paid by the industrial and commercial classes in the country districts, and made various small improvements in the collection of the *taille*.

Necker essayed other reforms which were not merely financial, and began the establishment of provincial assemblies, that were to share in the administration and to point out abuses. At first Necker merely suggested to the King that, by way of experiment, a single assembly of this kind should be set up in the province of Berry. It recognised the distinction between the three Estates; but the Third Estate had as many representatives as the clergy and nobles together, and all deliberated and voted in common. The members were not elected, but appointed by the government; and the powers of the assembly were narrowly defined, as Necker was not prepared to suppress the authority of the Intendant and his staff. Thus the new assembly resembled the old provincial Estates rather than the municipalities conceived by Turgot. Even this small concession to self-government proved so beneficial that in the following year Necker created two more assemblies of the same class in the *généralités* of Grenoble and Montauban respectively.

Necker also gave freedom to the last serfs on the royal domain and tried to assist enfranchisement elsewhere; but he lost the occasion of a notable reform by not enacting a general emancipation. He relaxed, but again did not abolish, the irritating rules which forced manufacturers of cloth and other commodities to make them of certain sizes and descriptions. He declared the many tolls throughout the kingdom held by private persons or by corporations redeemable, and promised that the Crown would begin their redemption at the return of peace. All these reforms showed good sense and good intentions, but they all betrayed a certain timidity and inability to conceive large designs. Yet if we blame Turgot for trying to do too much good at once, it seems unfair to blame Necker for trying to do good piecemeal.

Not all that Necker did to replenish the Treasury could countervail what was lost by the American war. The news of Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga in October, 1777, gave the French government courage to promise that open help which the colonists had long implored, and to conclude a formal treaty with them in 1778. In the ensuing war with England France had nothing to fear on the side of the Continent. Spain first, then Holland, and finally the Baltic Powers, either allied themselves with France or threatened to break with England. Accordingly France was on the whole successful. The naval supremacy of England was broken down. During three successive years the

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combined French and Spanish fleets swept the Channel, drove the English into their harbours, and kept Great Britain and Ireland in fear of invasion. In the Mediterranean Minorca fell, and Gibraltar seemed about to fall. In the Indian waters the French maintained a more than equal conflict with the English squadron. Beyond the Atlantic Cornwallis was isolated at Yorktown, and his surrender ensured the independence of the colonies. Ireland clamoured for free trade and legislative equality. Although one or two glorious feats of arms enabled Great Britain to make peace on better terms than at one time seemed possible, the national spirit had fallen very low, and the most dispassionate Englishmen often spoke as though their country was undone, or at least had for ever sunk from the dignity of a great Power. In none of the many wars waged between England and France has France gained so many successes and inflicted so much injury as in the war which severed the American colonies from the mother-country.

Thus the dishonour of the House of Bourbon and the losses of France in the Seven Years' War were signally avenged. The war had been most popular in France. As it was unnecessary to raise large armies, the cost in French lives had not been great; and, as Necker had undertaken to defray the whole expense by loans, the taxpayer had felt no hardship, nay, had been enriched by the artificial energy which many industries derive from war. Yet in a few years England was seen to be greater and more formidable than ever, and the French monarchy was shown to have received a mortal wound. The war made almost impossible the reform of the finances, the first condition of all other reform. Thenceforwards another national insolvency was imminent, and the endeavour to shun it ended in revolution. A mighty impulse to democratic ideas was involved in assisting the Americans, whose prime grievance was that they had been taxed without their own consent. The American colonies were, if we except one or two small Swiss Cantons, the most democratic societies of that age. The Frenchmen who came to their help observed among them an equality of conditions and a general well-being, due chiefly to the inexhaustible resources of a new continent, but not the less striking. The Americans, in their Declaration of Independence, spoke a language of abstract philosophy more intelligible to Frenchmen than the traditional lore of English patriots. The Americans asserted, sword in hand, maxims which in France had been proclaimed loudly in drawing-rooms but scarcely whispered in the market-place. The blunt ways of the Americans, their simple though plentiful mode of life, their active and out-of-door occupations, made them appear to the heated French fancy a commonwealth of philosophers or of antique heroes like Cincinnatus and Aristides, or possibly of natural men wise and virtuous and therefore free and happy, as man was everywhere until he had been debased by civilisation. Thus many of the French auxiliaries, among whom Lafayette was the most eminent,

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returned to France, feeling that they had seen in practice beyond the ocean what at home they had only read of in books. A people had proved able to declare itself free, to give itself a constitution, to shape its own destinies, and all this without returning to anarchy or even undergoing any dangerous convulsion. And when Frenchmen saw in succeeding years how their own ancient polity was failing, and how a sovereign deemed absolute could remedy few of those evils which he had himself condemned, they perceived no reason why their own nation should not do what the Americans had done, and regenerate France in a constituent assembly.

The events of the American war have been recorded elsewhere. But we must not pass over the means by which Necker met the cost of the war. He knew the faults of the fiscal system, was unwilling to enhance the distress of the poor, and overrated the power of credit. He therefore imposed no fresh burdens, save that he prolonged to 1790 some few taxes which would otherwise have expired in 1780. He trusted to borrowing; and his own financial skill and business connexions, as well as the general success of the French arms, enabled him to borrow great sums, although upon terms which we should not think favourable. Owing to the confusion of the French finances, it is impossible to state with any assurance the total amount of the loans which he contracted. The American war is supposed to have cost France nearly £50,000,000; but it went on for some time after Necker's dismissal, and the payment of expenses went on for some time after the war ended. Gomel supposes that Necker borrowed in all about 530,000,000 *livres*, of which 200,000,000 went to cover annual deficits and the rest in strictly military expenses. He floated his loans by representations of the state of the royal finances so flattering that charity can hardly suppose him to have believed them himself. He used, as had sometimes been done before, the credit of the *pays d'états*, of the city of Paris, and of the Order of the Holy Ghost, and he induced the clergy to lend 14,000,000 *livres*, repayable by annual instalments of 1,000,000. As he would impose no new taxes, he could not properly provide either for interest or for a sinking fund. And as the public was not likely to endure in peace heavier taxation than it had borne in war, we must allow that Necker prepared a grievous embarrassment for his successors and hastened the overthrow of the French monarchy.

Necker's fall from office was due to an innovation more daring than any which we have yet mentioned. Secrecy, it has been said, was the rule of the French administration; and, although the number of persons who concerned themselves with public affairs was always increasing, very little was really known about any of the departments of public business. In the finances the lack of order and method was such that even the King and the Controller-General were without exact information upon all points of consequence. It is not surprising that

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the notions entertained by the public should have been vague, or that the evils of the actual system, great as they were, should have been magnified in gossip. Necker resolved to interest the people in the finances. With the royal permission and the consent of Maurepas he put forth in 1781 his *Compte Rendu au Roi*, a voluminous and particular statement of national revenue and expenditure. It is true that the wish to please and be admired, so potent a weakness in men of Necker's temperament, led him to draw an unfaithful picture, and without telling absolute falsehoods to make a false impression. Instead of showing what had been raised and spent in the actual state of war, he drew an imaginary picture of revenue and expenditure in a normal state of affairs: that is, in time of peace. Although he said much about the imperfections of French finance, so as to heighten the merit of recent reforms which were fully described, he professed to show the existence of a surplus which had never existed in the eighteenth century. Great was the satisfaction of intelligent Frenchmen to find the national resources so ample; greater the enthusiasm called forth by the sensibility which Necker diffused through this as through all his other writings and speeches; greatest of all the admiration felt for a Minister who had dared to enlighten the people because he had no motive for keeping the people in ignorance.

Not such were the feelings of Maurepas. Although he had consented to the publication of the *Account*, he had not reckoned on the general emotion which it produced, and he felt jealous of Necker's mounting fame and influence. Necker understood that a cabal was forming against him, and believed that Sartines, the minister for naval affairs, was a ring-leader. He therefore entered into an alliance with the Queen's friends, also hostile to Sartines, and urged the King to replace him by de Castries. Under the impression that Maurepas desired this change, Louis consented, and was displeased to find that Maurepas was adverse. Maurepas now became more openly hostile and employed against Necker such devices as prompting others to carp at the *Account*, and betraying to members of the *Parlement* of Paris a memoir drawn up by Necker for the King on the subject of the Provincial Assemblies, in which the conduct of the Parliaments had been severely censured. The *Parlement* therefore refused to register a decree for the formation of a Provincial Assembly in the Boulonnais, but had to submit on finding that the King still supported Necker. Exalted by this success, Necker sought to obtain a seat in Council with the style of Minister of State, honours hitherto withheld on account of his religion; and, although his friends warned him to be prudent, he declared that he would resign if his wishes were not granted. When Maurepas assured the King that Necker's admission to the Council would be followed by the resignation of the other Ministers, Louis, against his own wish, and even against the wish of Marie-Antoinette, accepted Necker's resignation on May 19, 1781.

We have seen that Necker was immeasurably inferior to Turgot, and

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that his administration in some respects deserved the severest blame. Yet it was a mistake in Louis to part with Necker. For Necker was a reformer according to his powers; and his retirement before the enmity of the futile Maurepas was a scandal to public opinion. Necker, even more than Choiseul, was escorted home by the nation. His country-house became a court whither all who wished to be thought enlightened, humane, and lovers of virtue divorced from power, thronged to pay their respects. Many nobles came to wait on the banker, and even the Archbishop of Paris and other prelates paid formal visits to the Calvinist. Necker was not indeed the wiser or the happier for this homage, which confirmed his too flattering estimate of his own qualifications. But Louis had a second time thrown away that power which public opinion alone can give, and which a wiser sovereign could have turned to such good account for himself and his kingdom.

There now ensued a second reaction. The King left to Maurepas the choice of a Controller-General; and Maurepas, who by this time had a settled distaste for the pretentious and troublesome persons known as reformers, fixed upon a dull and respectable veteran, Joly de Fleury, who, we are assured, never lost an opportunity of lamenting the diffusion of enlightenment. Fleury held office from June of 1781 to March of 1783. But he and Maurepas thought it necessary to bruit abroad that they would follow in the footsteps of Necker. Fleury found that the surplus implied in the *Account* did not exist even in time of peace, and imparted the fact to Louis, who now first began to feel that dislike of Necker which afterwards became a fixed prejudice. As France was still at war, large sums had to be raised; but the financiers did not extend to Fleury the confidence which they had placed in Necker, and, as borrowing was difficult, new taxes were inevitable. A third *vingtième* was imposed in July, 1782. Then the *Parlement* protested, declaring that the taxpayer could pay no more and that the public money was squandered. It repeated these complaints even in the act of registering the edicts for fresh taxation. The *Parlement* of Besançon made a like remonstrance. Although a deputation of that body was summoned to Versailles to hear a reprimand from the King's lips, they had scarcely returned to Besançon when the incorrigible *Parlement* demanded the convocation of the States-General. The demand was little noticed at the time, but it was not lost. It is true that the *Parlements* had spoken without discernment, and that the war made new taxes the least of evils. Yet the feeble sovereign and unwise Minister gave way and ventured on no further taxation. Instead, Joly de Fleury resorted to the worst of all the traditional resources, making and selling a number of useless offices, especially in the financial department.

The reaction was felt in other ways. A regulation dated May 22, 1781, and passed against the will of Ségur, then Minister of War, required sixteen quarters of nobility for all officers in the army, thus

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enhancing an unjust privilege at the very time when all privileges were more and more called in question. With similar blindness the *Parlements* reserved their best places for persons of at least two degrees of nobility. In many parts of France the *seigneurs* became unusually active in enforcing obsolete or doubtful manorial rights. The clergy gained a recognition of their claim to tithe certain crops lately introduced, such as lucerne and potatoes. But when the parish priests represented the meagreness of their livelihood they were silenced by the government. Maurepas having died in November, 1781, the King leant chiefly upon Vergennes, an able man and a master in foreign policy, but little acquainted with finance or administration. The signing of the preliminaries of peace in January, 1783, was more welcome to the nation than to the Controller-General, who knew that he was expected to remit taxes which he could not spare, considering the enormous growth of the debt. Fearing to suffer for his own weakness and his predecessor's, he induced the King to set up a Council of Finance, with the Controller-General as president, the other councillors being Vergennes and Miromênil, the latter of whom, as Keeper, would have to overbear the resistance of the *Parlements*. Such a council might have done good in devising ways of retrenchment, but the other Ministers, especially Ségur and Castries, thought it humiliating that a new authority should be interposed between the King and themselves, while the courtiers viewed it as a hindrance to designs upon the Treasury. A strong cabal was formed against Fleury, who found that he no longer possessed the King's confidence, and resigned in March, 1783.

Fleury was succeeded by Lefèvre d'Ormesson, an honest and industrious man, but unequal to so perplexed a state of affairs. He feared to lay fresh taxes on the people, and hoped that with the return of peace borrowing and retrenchment might suffice. When he applied to his colleagues for an account of the financial position of their several departments and suggestions for economies, they took no notice of his request. Thus ended d'Ormesson's hope of reducing expenses. The State was in fact without a head, for Louis would neither act as master himself nor uphold the authority of his Ministers. Driven to despair, d'Ormesson negotiated a secret advance from the *Caisse d'Escompte*, the first of a series of transactions which ruined the *Caisse* without saving the government. Before long a crisis forced the *Caisse* to call for its money, which the Crown could not repay, so that it had to obtain a royal decree suspending cash payments. Thus d'Ormesson was thrown back upon borrowing in the open market, and having filled up the measure of his discredit by other faults he retired in November, 1783.

The definitive treaty of peace had been signed on September 3, 1783. But the effects of the course taken to raise money during the war remained. The state of the Treasury was worse than at any previous period of the reign, while the Crown had lost the confidence of the

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nation. It was so necessary to have an able and daring Controller-General that the King bestowed the office on Charles-Alexandre de Calonne. Calonne remained Controller-General for three years and a half, during which time he did more than any of his predecessors to hasten the Revolution.

He could already number many years in the public service. He had been Intendant of Metz and afterwards of Lille, and had long been looking for the preferment which he now received. He was a courtly, engaging personage, eloquent, sanguine, open to large ideas, fertile in bold expedients, but incurably frivolous and unscrupulous. In private life a spendthrift and votary of pleasure, in public life anxious only to conciliate and astonish, he undertook, perhaps hoped, to set everything right without offending anybody. France, he had always said, possessed inexhaustible resources, and if the Crown were poor, it was only because the Ministers did not know their business; and the saying had just enough truth to be dangerous. By a lively attack upon Necker's *Compte Rendu* Calonne had gratified Maurepas, although without gaining his patronage. He had, however, impressed many by his clever, daring talk; and even Vergennes was his friend and believed in his capacity. He could count upon the courtiers, who felt with unerring instinct that Calonne would not be morose about the public money. He had been pressed upon the King when Fleury retired, but the King disliked his character; and, as the Queen shared this dislike, Calonne was baulked of his ambition. But the resignation of d'Ormesson left the King without any resource if he would not recall Necker; and he therefore silenced his doubts and gave to Calonne what he had so eagerly desired.

The new Controller-General found the state of the Treasury far more alarming than he had supposed. He afterwards assured the Notables that when he entered on his office the annual deficit had risen to 80,000,000 *livres*, the revenue had been anticipated to the amount of 176,000,000 *livres*, and the outstanding debts of all kinds due by the government exceeded 300,000,000 *livres*. As the public had been kept in ignorance, and looked for a remission of taxes, it was impossible to meet these demands by new taxation. Retrenchment, according to Calonne, would have been equally perilous. For the government had need of all its credit, and credit can be kept up only by appearing to be rich. Calonne resolved neither to impose taxes nor to cut down expenditure, but to win the confidence of the nation by showing unbounded confidence in himself, to borrow as recklessly in time of peace as Necker had borrowed in time of war, and to put his trust in the revival of business, the growth of prosperity, and the impetus given by a lavish outlay of the public money. His first measure was judicious. He recalled the decree suspending cash payments, reorganised the *Caisse d'Escompte*, and did his best to strengthen it in public opinion. His

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second measure was astute. He persuaded Louis to suppress the Council of Finance, thus freeing himself from the supervision of Vergennes, and gratifying the other Ministers who resented control. He then began the execution of his policy with a loan of 100,000,000 *livres*. He was thus enabled to make an apparent reform by paying punctually the dividends upon public securities which hitherto had been almost always in arrear. He gave out that he intended to abolish the internal customs-barriers which did such injury to commerce; but he was never in a position to make the immediate sacrifice required. The severe winter having caused much distress, he readily persuaded Louis to grant a large sum for relief, which was to be met by economies in the Court and Household. He reduced the duties on certain articles of common use, such as coffee and sugar. He set up a sinking-fund which, though modest in amount, was by the magical potency of compound interest to pay off the debt in a short period. He actually paid into this sinking-fund the appointed sums for 1785 and 1786, but then stopped for the vulgar reason that he had no money, and found that, notwithstanding all his ingenuity, a national debt can never be extinguished by borrowing even on the most audacious scale. He spent freely on useful public works, such as roads and harbours. He spent as freely in making friends at Court, gave to all who asked, paid the debts of the King's brothers, and enabled the King himself to buy Rambouillet and St Cloud. A fine harvest in 1784, and the expansion of commerce and industry owing to the peace, seemed to justify Calonne's hopes; but his policy left him always in distress, and he had to renew the practice of creating and selling offices. By September, 1784, he was forced to issue another loan of 125,000,000 *livres*, alleging that it was needed to cover liabilities incurred in the late war, and promising various reforms in the incidence and collection of the taxes. But the *Parlement* which had always distrusted Calonne, now took alarm, demurred to registering the edict for the loan, and presented a remonstrance to the King upon the growth of the public debt. Since his accession, it said, 1,200,000,000 *livres* had been borrowed, and part at least of the recent loans had been wasted. Louis insisted on registration and the *Parlement* gave way. Although the loan was nominally issued at 5 per cent., the advantages given to subscribers brought the real return up to 8 per cent., a rate so tempting that the whole was speedily subscribed.

In January, 1785, just as the public were beginning to feel somewhat anxious about the effects of Calonne's policy, there appeared, without the royal warrant, a new work by Necker, entitled *The Administration of the Finances of France*. It contained much indirect praise of the author and blame of his successors, a description of the faults of the French financial system, and some remarks and proposals for improvement, usually of the most cautious character, for, even now, Necker did not contemplate the suppression of privilege in taxation. He still assumed

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that the revenue balanced expenditure, and that the financial state of the kingdom was sound. Whatever the defects of the book, its success was amazing. Bulky as it was, nearly twelve thousand copies were sold in the first month, and in March a second edition was sold off. As the actual deficit at this time amounted to 100,000,000 *livres* a year, Necker had made it yet more difficult for Calonne ever to disclose the real condition of the Treasury; and for this and for other reasons Calonne, resenting the publication, obtained a royal order exiling Necker from Paris. But this only gave fresh credit to the author and brought deeper suspicion on the Minister. Meanwhile Calonne continued to play his desperate game. He announced further measures for the relief of distress in the country districts; he founded a new East India Company; he promulgated new rules about pensions, and took steps to abate stock-jobbing; he gratified purists with a scheme for the payment of public creditors defrauded many years before by Terray, and gratified the courtiers as formerly by giving them everything they wanted.

But even Calonne had at length to own that these were makeshifts, and that a State cannot borrow for ever. Taxation must be made more productive; and, since the taxpayer could hardly be forced to pay more, exemptions must be abolished. Calonne thought therefore of taxing the clergy. He resolved to begin with an enquiry into the value of their possessions — an enquiry more than once meditated by former Ministers, but always baffled by clerical resistance. Here again his constant lack of ready money defeated a useful project. He had to demand from the Assembly of the clergy in 1785 an increase in their free contribution, and they in return obtained leave to reassemble in 1786 and a promise that nothing further should be done till then. When the time came, they were able to stave off enquiry; and Calonne had to comfort himself with a larger scheme for the taxation of all privileged persons. Such was his happy disposition that whatever he knew to be desirable he imagined to be easy.

At the end of 1785 Calonne found it necessary to borrow again. He issued a loan of 80,000,000 *livres* and again overpowered the reluctance of the *Parlement*. The loan was introduced to the public with a flourishing statement of the financial position and an intimation that the sum now raised would be paid off in ten years. In 1786 Calonne gained his last successes: a favourable bargain with the Farmers-General and a commercial treaty with England. However empty the French Treasury, the French nation was at this time prosperous. Industry and commerce had thriven since the Peace of Versailles, and comfort and luxury were spreading. The wall lately built round Paris, so as to ensure payment on all commodities brought into the city, had swelled the proceeds of the *octroi*. Owing to these causes the yield of the indirect taxes had been increased; and Calonne was enabled to lease them for the largest sum yet known. The commercial treaty with England

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was concluded in September. Such was the impulse given to trade between the two kingdoms that French imports into England increased in value from 21,000,000 *livres* before 1786 to 34,000,000 *livres* in 1787. Yet the treaty caused much discontent in some Provinces. For the French manufacturers, screened from all competition, were often inferior to their English rivals in machinery and in organisation, and were consequently at a disadvantage even in the home market. It was said also that French custom-house officers were lax as compared with English, so that English importers into France often evaded payment of duty, while French importers into England paid in full. Many of the *cahiers* of 1789 require that the commercial treaty with England should be denounced or at least modified.

Calonne's experience only made him more reckless. As he could not venture on a new loan he now had recourse to expedients; and in September he actually procured a decree of Council ordering the city of Paris to raise 30,000,000 *livres* for improvements, to be lent to the State during the interval before the works were begun. The end was evidently at hand. Calonne was forced to begin the bitter task of enlightening his dupes, and first of all his sovereign. In August he made a full statement of the financial position to Louis, saying that when he took office he had found an enormous deficit, that he had vainly tried to make it good since, that the actual resources of the State were insufficient, and that all new taxation must be uniform, admitting of no exemption. He therefore proposed a general land-tax (*subvention territoriale*) and a stamp-tax. In order to gain the acquiescence of a disappointed and angry people, benefits would have to be conferred. Calonne therefore proposed that the *corvée* should be suppressed once more, that the internal customs-barriers should be removed, that the trade in corn should be made free, and that elective assemblies without any distinction of Orders should be set up in all the Provinces. Thus the circle had been completed. In order to raise money Calonne proposed to enact once more the principal reforms executed or planned by Turgot and set aside after Turgot's dismissal. Within a space of little more than ten years the policy of the State upon matters of the most vital consequence, matters affecting the welfare of millions, was to be reversed a second time, not because society had been transformed or because new enlightenment had been vouchsafed to Ministers, but merely because the circumstances of the moment made such a course seem opportune to those who misgoverned the kingdom.

Calonne knew that the reforms which he advised would be resisted by the *Parlements*, and he despaired of overcoming their obstinacy unless public opinion could be enlisted on the side of the Crown. He therefore proposed to convene a Council of Notables chosen by the King from the Three Estates of the realm, and to gain their approval of his schemes. Such Councils had been called in former times, but the

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precedents were few and remote, and altogether at variance with that unqualified absolute power which Louis XIV had bequeathed to his descendants. To purchase the right of imposing new taxes by listening to the advice of subjects was to take the first step towards constitutional monarchy. In the actual temper of the public none could foresee what a Council of Notables might do, or what might be the consequences of its action. Almost any other King would have upbraided Calonne with his manifold deceptions, would have seen the risks inseparable from his project, and would have dismissed, even if he did not punish, a minister who had trifled away the last resources of the State. Louis acquiesced without a struggle. Calonne pressed for speed, and hoped to see his plan executed before the end of 1786. Vergennes and Miroménil, staunch upholders of the royal authority, disliked the proposal for convening the Notables, though they did not reject it, for they knew not what to propose instead. But they were opposed to haste, and they carried the King with them. Calonne was left to find ways and means for the interval. As the last loan had been taken up very slowly he would not issue another, but turned to the *Caisse d'Escompte*. The *Caisse* agreed to increase its capital to 80,000,000 *livres* and lend 70,000,000 to the Treasury. In return it received a monopoly of issuing notes for the next thirty years. Calonne struggled on till December, when he was forced to beg again for prompt action, and the King declared that he would convene the Notables within a month.

To us who look back upon the events that ensued this resolution appears big with momentous consequences. To Louis it seemed an escape from intolerable perplexity. He wrote to Calonne that he had not been able to sleep the night after his declaration, but that it was for pleasure. The public were less satisfied when it appeared from the terms of the summons that the Notables were convened merely to learn the King's intentions, for they contended that the only object was to gain the semblance of national consent to new taxes. A few discerning men, however, like Lafayette, Mirabeau, and Bailly, saw that matters would not end there. Calonne was careless about ensuring the nomination of persons who were at least not his enemies. The composition of the assembly was singular if we consider the use which it was intended to serve. Out of a total of one hundred and forty-four, forty-six were Princes or nobles, eleven were clergymen, twelve were members of the Council, thirty-eight were magistrates of the supreme Courts, twelve were deputies of the *pays d'états*, and twenty-five were municipal officers. Thus the representatives of the Third Estate were few, and mostly of that official class which shared many of the prejudices of the higher ranks. The First and Second Estates, so deeply concerned in the maintenance of privilege, and the magistracy, at bottom so conservative, formed an overwhelming majority. Calonne probably hoped thus to disarm his natural adversaries, more especially the *Parlements*. For the edicts approved

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by the Notables would still need registration, and the *Parlements* would have the opportunity of contesting every reform a second time. The result showed how erroneous were the Minister's calculations.

The actual meeting of the Notables was delayed by the illness and death of Vergennes. During the interval they remained idle in Paris, where they caught the spirit of discontent and criticism now general in the capital. Meantime Calonne behaved with his wonted frivolity. To the last he gave out that the finances were in excellent order and the debt in course of regular liquidation. He neglected to break the disappointment which he knew to be inevitable by taking some at least of the Notables into his confidence. Although he was about to propound a vast scheme of reform which would touch all the interests of a great people and require years for complete execution, he took no pains to formulate it until a few days before the session began. Not until the last week did he begin drafting the necessary papers. Talleyrand, who, though no expert in administration or finance, was employed by Calonne to draft the proposals regarding the corn trade and to help in drawing up other parts of the programme, relates that Calonne did not send for him till February 14. On the 22nd the Notables met for the first time. During the previous five months Calonne had done nothing.

After the King had opened the proceedings, the Controller-General set forth the necessities of the State and the remedies which he had to offer. He told the Notables that there had always been a deficit; that it had been growing throughout the reign; that 1,250,000,000 *livres* had been borrowed in the last ten years, and that numerous sums were now due by the government to various creditors. He added that the existing taxes could not be made to yield more than at present, and that the only hope lay in the reform of abuses, particularly in the suppression of privileges. Then he announced the list of reforms. They included the formation of provincial assemblies, the imposition of a general land-tax and stamp-tax, the suppression of the *vingtièmes* and the *corvée*, the exemption of the nobles from the *capitation*, the reduction of the *taille* and the *gabelle*, the restoration of freedom to the corn trade, the improvement of the revenue arising from the royal domain, and various economies in administration and expedients for reducing the debt. Some of these proposals could only serve to conciliate the privileged orders. Others were real reforms. But taken together they could not be executed without long and patient labour. Thus Calonne announced the establishment of a land-tax payable by all land-owners. The due assessment of such a tax throughout a great kingdom implied processes of surveying and valuation which must extend over years. The gain to the Treasury from the new taxes would be gradual, while its loss in the suppression or reduction of old taxes would be immediate. In the near future Calonne's proposals would yield little; but it was in the near future that a generous growth of revenue was

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needed, or rather it was needed at once. Even apart from their attachment to privilege, the Notables might well be surprised and angered by Calonne's statement. They were still more provoked by the frank avowal that the King's resolutions were fixed and that the Notables had only to devise the most suitable means for giving them effect. On the following day the Notables listened to the reports in which the several proposals of the government were explained at length. Then in obedience to the royal will they separated into seven *bureaux*, a Prince of the blood presiding over each, and proceeded to consider what they had heard. They were not long in raising many objections. They approved, indeed, the provincial assemblies, but demanded that they should be representative of the Three Estates. They criticised severely the project of a general land-tax. They called for accounts of public revenue and expenditure and insisted upon retrenchment. Calonne tried to overcome their ill-will in a conference with the presidents and select members of the *bureaux*. But, though he displayed an energy and an eloquence in strange contrast with his previous sloth, he could not cancel the effect of his disclosures or prevail upon the froward humour of the Notables. Weeks passed away; the Notables remained in a very bad temper; and the public, although not admitted to their debates, applauded their obstinacy.

At length Calonne, impatient at the resistance he encountered and hoping to overbear it by stress of public opinion, published his speeches to the Notables and the statements drawn up for their use, with an introduction which insinuated that the privileged orders were selfishly hostile to a scheme which would at once supply the Treasury and relieve the people. He did not pause to think of the consequences of thus making public opinion a judge and divider over both King and Notables. Nor did he weigh the power of reprisal which the Notables possessed. They at once adopted a formal protest denying the insinuation and declaring that they thought themselves in duty bound to have some assurance that new taxes were necessary; that economy appeared to them the best means of restoring the finances; and that they had accordingly asked for full statements of revenue and expenditure which the Minister had obstinately withheld. As Louis allowed this protest to be published, it got abroad that he was wavering, while the public, already prejudiced against Calonne, received it with applause.

The Notables having adjourned over Easter, Calonne persuaded the King to dismiss Miromênil on the ground that he had instigated their opposition and to make Lamoignon Keeper of the Seals. He then went on to ask for the dismissal of the Baron de Breteuil, the Minister of the King's Household, a personal friend of the Queen. Marie-Antoihette, who had always disliked Calonne, was now incensed against him and did her best to drive him from power. With the help of the Comte de Provence and other great persons she succeeded. The King, indifferent

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to the Minister although resolved on his measures, tired and distracted and hoping to conciliate the Notables, gave way and dismissed Calonne on the very same day (April 8) on which he had dismissed Miroménil.

Thus for the third time in his short reign Louis had let himself be deprived of a Minister, who, whatever his faults of character, was undoubtedly able, and whom he could not immediately replace with any fit successor. He named de Fourqueux, a plain, respectable man, Controller-General; but he was quite unequal to the task of carrying out Calonne's plans. Montmorin, who had succeeded Vergennes as Foreign Secretary, begged the King to send for Necker; but Louis had now taken a dislike to him which necessity alone could overcome. Necker published another pamphlet to refute Calonne's statements to the Notables in so far as they reflected on his character. For this offence he was again exiled from Paris, a penalty which made him even more an idol than he had yet been. Louis himself convened the Notables for April 23, and made a judicious speech; but they, although affected, continued to press for further particulars. Lafayette, who was one of the Notables, had expressed the opinion that they had no right to grant taxes, and this opinion began to gain ground among the rest. Thus time passed. Nothing was done; the Treasury sank daily into deeper penury; and Louis was overcome by the difficulties which met him in every direction. The Queen now insisted that the time required a skilful and popular minister. She suggested Loménie de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, who had distinguished himself as a member of the Estates of Languedoc and as one of the Notables. He was made, not Controller-General, but chief of the Council of Finance, the position formerly held by Maurepas and Vergennes. Fourqueux was put aside and replaced by another man equally obscure, Laurent de Villedeuil. Brienne had entreated the King to give him Necker for a colleague; but Louis, fixedly averse to Necker and only half awake to his own danger, refused. Such was Brienne's reputation that even the liberal and philosophic party applauded his appointment. But the last clerical Prime Minister of France had nothing great about him save his ambition, which was boundless. He failed to humour the Notables or to break the *Parlements*; he made concessions which earned only contempt, and reforms which excited no gratitude; he left his master a King only in name, as bankrupt of authority as of revenue, and France in a condition scarcely to be distinguished from anarchy.

When he took office, he had first to consider what he should do with the Notables. While yet one of their number he had eagerly opposed Calonne's scheme of reform, which as Minister he had to execute if it were possible. In a position so invidious he would perhaps have done well to dissolve the Assembly at once and try other expedients. Fearing to take this course he resolved to continue the session. By a lamentable story of the public needs and the promise of extensive economies, he

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persuaded the Notables to approve a loan of 60,000,000 *livres*. But this was his only success. Although he stated the deficit at a higher figure than any given by Calonne, he could not get their approval for the land-tax or the stamp-tax. They still declared that they had no taxing power. Only one of their *bureaux* pronounced for the land-tax as a substitute for the *vingtièmes*. Brienne therefore dissolved the Notables on May 25.

The Notables had done nothing, but their assembly had momentous results. The King had published his distress and yet had obtained no relief. He had once more explained to the nation how grossly it was misgoverned, had propounded a great plan of reform, had announced his unalterable purpose to execute it, and had then wavered before the opposition of an assembly which had no representative character or law-making power. The Notables had called for further information, had insisted on economy, had raised objections to all new taxes, and had ended by suggesting that only the nation had the right to tax. Those of the Notables who were not themselves courtiers went home, to spread in every part of France their antipathy to the Court and their contempt for the Ministers. From this time the deference for the Crown, formerly so profound in France, began to disappear. The King was still esteemed for his gentleness and good-will; but he was no longer thought competent to reform abuses. The Notables by their manifest unwillingness to give up privilege in taxation had also embittered the people against the First and Second Estates; and the belief became general that France must have a new constitution before the disorder of the finances could be redressed.

Freed from the Notables the Ministers had still to consider how they should deal with the *Parlements*. For they were still committed to Calonne's list of reforms, and it was certain that some of these would be opposed by the *Parlements*, if only to keep up their tradition and to gain the popular applause. Lamoignon wished the King to enact all the reforms in a mass, and if necessary to enforce registration. But Brienne, already weary and disheartened, would not face a conflict; and Louis, always soft and hesitating, agreed with Brienne. It was resolved to enact the reforms part by part, beginning with those which were thought to be most generally acceptable. Three edicts, therefore — the first restoring freedom of trade in corn, the second creating in all the *pays d'élection* assemblies like those devised by Necker, and the third commuting the *corvée* into a money-tax — were presented to the *Parlement* and registered without a murmur. Then the ministers ventured to put forth a new edict imposing the stamp-tax. As all new taxes were unpopular, the *Parlement* at once began to oppose. It appointed a committee to examine the project and resolved to ask the King for details of public income and expenditure. The King returned a very mild answer. The public, especially in Paris, applauded the *Parlement*,

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and the *Parlement* of Rouen echoed its protest. Still Brienne temporised, when in a sitting of July 19 a member of the *Parlement*, the Abbé Sabathier, used the memorable words, "It is not *états de finance* (statements of accounts) that we want, it is *États Généraux*." This spark kindled a great fire. The *Parlement* at once drew up an address to the King, declaring that only the nation assembled in its States General could authorise a permanent tax. The address was coupled with fresh remonstrances as to the waste of public money and the need of thrift. The King and Ministers shunned a direct encounter, and presented for registration another edict imposing a general land-tax. Again the *Parlement* professed its inability, and demanded the meeting of the States General. Louis would have shown his high displeasure; but his Queen and Malesherbes, again a Minister, although without a portfolio, urged him to forbear. He therefore contented himself with holding a "*lit de justice*" at Versailles on August 6, where d'Aligre, the President of the Parliament, and Seguier, the Advocate-General, in the strongest terms repeated their objections; but the edicts were perforce registered. Next day the *Parlement* met and declared the registration illegal and null. Still the Ministers wavered, while the people of Paris were wound up to the highest tension, and the King and Queen were reviled in outrageous terms. Brienne tried to make a diversion by announcing economies in the Household, but no man took any notice. The *Parlement* next ordered the prosecution of Calonne for misappropriating public money; and, though the Council annulled this order, Calonne fled to England. Then the *Parlement* repeated its censure of the enforced registration and its demand for the assembling of the States General. The public responded with a fresh burst of applause. Brienne and his colleagues now resolved to banish the *Parlement* to Troyes. The *Parlement* went triumphantly into exile and riots broke out in Paris. The *Chambre des Comptes* and the *Cour des Aides*, which had taken the same tone as the *Parlement*, escaped with a gentle reprimand. The exiled magistrates continued their protests, which were echoed by the other *Parlements*, while the ministry, pressed on one side by want of funds, and on the other by public opinion, could not move forwards or backwards. It was of no avail that Louis bestowed on Brienne a fresh mark of confidence in the title of Principal Minister, which obliged his colleagues to prepare the business of their respective departments with him before submitting it to the King.

The course of foreign affairs helped to complete the discredit of the Ministers. In the United Provinces the historic feud between the House of Orange and the republican party had broken out afresh. The republican party had usually regarded France as their friend and had procured a treaty of alliance with France in November, 1785. England and Prussia, jealous of French ascendancy, supported the cause of the Prince of Orange, William V. At length the rancour of the parties

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rose to actual civil war. Frederick William II, King of Prussia, took advantage of an affront to his sister Wilhelmina, the Stadholder's wife, to assemble an army on the Dutch frontier; and the English government made an alliance with him and fitted out a naval force. The French government could not see unmoved the ruin of their party in Holland. They promised the republicans armed support and resolved to form a camp at Givet. But every active measure was hindered by want of money and of public confidence. Ségur, the Minister of War, and Castries, the Minister of Marine, resigned because they could not move Brienne to do what they thought necessary. They were replaced by the Comte de Brienne, the Archbishop's younger brother, a man of no consequence, and by the Comte de la Luzerne, then commanding in St Domingo. As Frederick William now felt certain that France could and would do nothing, he sent Duke Charles William Ferdinand of Brunswick to invade Holland, where no resistance was made. France did not even try to intervene on behalf of her friends. The Orange party thus became supreme, French influence in Holland was destroyed, and French weakness was displayed to all Europe. These events could not but sharpen the contempt felt by the French people for their rulers and embarrass still further the conduct of affairs at home.

In August Laurent de Villedeuil resigned the office of Controller-General, and was succeeded by Lambert, a man equally obscure, the third Controller-General in five months. About the same time the contest between the Crown and the *Parlement* was closed by a precarious peace. Brienne despaired of success against the violence of public opinion, and was more than ever in need of money. The *Parlement* began to tire of its stay in a provincial city and feared to wear out its popularity. Both parties were thus disposed to treat. The Council indeed annulled the resolutions taken by the *Parlement* in August, and prolonged its exile over the vacation. But when the *Parlement* deputed d'Aligre to set forth the obstacles to the dispensation of justice arising from its stay at Troyes, he found a gracious reception with the King and the chief Minister, who consented to suppress the edicts for a stamp-tax and a land-tax. All that the *Parlement* would do in return was to register an edict, prolonging the time during which the increased *vingtièmes* could be levied. It is true that even by this small favour the *Parlement* belied its former declaration of inability to grant taxes. On these terms the *Parlement* returned to Paris, September 24, 1787, amid the rejoicings of the people, and with the proud sense of a complete victory over the Crown.

It might have been foretold that the conflict would presently be renewed. Resistance to the government was highly popular and in no way dangerous. The *Parlement* was not restrained either by accurate knowledge of the necessities of State — for it had no part in administration, or by large views of public policy — for its stubbornness was mainly an

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affair of sentiment and tradition, or by the feeling which sobers an opposition in a free commonwealth that it may be called upon to govern — for the function of the *Parlement* in politics was purely negative. On the other side the government was sinking ever deeper into penury and contempt. About this time Calonne published his *Requête au Roi* with the object of clearing his own character and showing that he had always acted with the knowledge and approval of the King. He injured the King more than he benefited himself. He did not spare Brienne, and here his accusations were not thrown away. The public now began to reckon the chances of national bankruptcy; and the fund-holders became eager for the meeting of the States General as the only means to a thorough reform of the finances. Thus the very class which is usually most attached to the existing order of the State had learnt in France to wish for something little short of a revolution.

Forced to raise money, and yet afraid of the *Parlement*, Brienne took up once more the policy which had failed with Calonne, the combination of reforms with measures for filling the treasury. He resolved to issue a series of loans amounting in all to 120,000,000 *livres*, but spread over five years, to promise the convocation of the States General, and to relieve the Protestants from one of their greatest hardships, the denial of civil status. The Protestants being neither able nor willing to partake of the sacraments of the Roman Church, their births, marriages, and deaths were left without legal record, and all their relations of family and property were thus kept in doubt and confusion. It was now designed to supply such a record without relieving Protestants from any of their other disabilities. At Brienne's instance the King held a "royal session" of the *Parlement* on November 19, in which the decrees for the loan and for restoring a civil status to Protestants were presented for registration. At a "royal session," herein differing from a "*lit de justice*," the members of the *Parlement* were allowed to state and to justify their opinions; and the discussion had lasted some time when Lamoignon spoke to the King, who suddenly cut short the debate and ordered immediate registration. The Duke of Orleans complained of this proceeding as irregular; but the King refused to listen and took his departure. The *Parlement* continued its sitting, and disclaimed all share in the registration of the edicts. There is reason to believe that, if the debate had not been interrupted, the majority would have accepted registration. The Ministers had therefore made a fresh mistake; but they could not overlook such an affront to the sovereign as was implied in the conduct of the *Parlement*, and were forced to begin again the hopeless struggle with these obstinate lawyers. The Duke of Orleans was ordered to retire to his country-house of Villers-Cotterets, and two of the boldest magistrates, Freteau and Sabathier, were imprisoned by *lettres de cachet*. A deputation of the *Parlement* was summoned to Versailles to hear a

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rebuke from the King and witness the erasure of the offending resolution. The *Parlement* answered with remonstrances, and was abetted by most of the provincial *Parlements*. The *Parlements* had won for a moment the place they had always desired as leaders and spokesmen of the French nation and seemed a counterpoise to the power of the Crown. But it would be a mistake to credit them even now with insight or with large views of government. They set themselves against even the small measure of toleration which the Ministers had resolved to bestow on the Protestants. It was not until June, 1788, that they consented to register this edict. With regard to the finances they had no constructive policy. And of the results which would flow from the summoning of the States General they had, as the event proved, no forecast even approaching the truth.

The new Provincial Assemblies created in June met before the close of the year, but rather exasperated than calmed the public mind. Their constitution disappointed some reformers, because all the original members were chosen by the Crown, and were only to be replaced gradually by elected members. Some provinces, like Hainault and Dauphiné, would have preferred the revival of their historic Estates. In other Provinces the *Parlements* resisted to the utmost the institution of the new assemblies. When these hindrances had been overcome and the assemblies met, they proved not unworthy of the hopes cherished by the government. The members of the different Estates showed a spirit of cordial cooperation and industry in devising reforms. But the assemblies, the first endeavour towards local and popular control, were not easily harmonised with the old administrative system, rigidly despotic and central. Some friction was unavoidable. Moreover in these assemblies the gathered discontent of all classes found utterance; and, as the age was in the highest degree rhetorical and sentimental, their members sometimes used language directly tending to encourage disorder. The Ministers had hoped that the assemblies would help in the collection of taxes, but did not find them very useful for this purpose. A valuable improvement, but one which could be perfected only by time and with the advantage of quiet, had been hurried through amid increasing anarchy, and so proved a new perplexity to its authors. Few governments have sacrificed so much in power to gain so little in popularity as the government of Louis XVI.

The year 1788 opened without any change in the condition of France. The Ministers tried to conciliate opinion by such activity as the state of the revenue allowed, and in March, 1788, they redeemed a royal promise by publishing a statement of receipts and expenses for the current year, which Gomel has pronounced the fullest and most trustworthy of those published before the Revolution. It showed, indeed, a deficit of 160,000,000 *livres*, which could not easily be made good by borrowing, since no capitalist would lend without the sanction

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of the *Parlement* to the loan. The *Parlement*, conscious of its power, persisted in denouncing the severities of the previous November, and in asserting the right of individuals not to be deprived of liberty save by legal process. The spirit of criticism and resistance became more and more general, and pamphlets were multiplied beyond all former precedent. The language of the *Parlement* was so revolutionary, and its endeavours to disable the government from borrowing money or levying taxes were so unscrupulous, that the ministry resolved on a bold stroke. Two of the ringleaders of the opposition, d'Espréménil and Goislard, were to be seized and imprisoned; and the *Parlement*, as an institution, was to be transformed. That a body created to administer justice should presume to exercise a veto on laws and taxes was itself anomalous; and this body in its own sphere was not free from reproach. The judicial system of France, if system it could be called, was the gradual result of ages, and in many ways ill-suited to modern French society. The same might be said of law in France, for the criminal law remained in many particulars barbarous and inhuman. Brienne and his colleagues proposed therefore to connect the abolition of the veto claimed by the *Parlement* with a reform of the law and the judicial system. Their designs were supposed to be secret, but were in fact well known to the *Parlement*. On the night of May 4, when d'Espréménil and Goislard were to be arrested, they took refuge in the Palace of Justice, whence they had to be torn by military force on the 6th, after an impressive display of fortitude and majesty by themselves and their colleagues.

The *Parlement* now suspended its sittings, and on May 8 was summoned to a *lit de justice* at Versailles. The King there announced the remodelling of the judicature. A new *Cour Plénière* was to take the place of the *Parlement*, the senior members of the old Court being, however, eligible to the new. The *Cour Plénière* was alone to exercise the office of registration, the provincial *Parlements* being henceforth restrained to strictly judicial duty. The relations and powers of the inferior Courts were to be so amended as to make justice more cheap and speedy. The conflicting bodies of custom which had force in different parts of the kingdom were to be harmonised. Criminal procedure was to be reformed, and in particular the use of torture to obtain evidence was to be abandoned. The King also promised that the States General should be convoked as often as the condition of public affairs made their meeting advisable. The President replied with a protest that the King could not violate the fundamental laws of the realm. He added that the *Parlement* was to suffer merely for having asserted that only the States General could tax the people. The *Cour des Aides* and the *Chambre des Comptes*, when required to register the edicts, repeated the protest of the *Parlement*. The public was divided, for the abuses of the judicial system were keenly felt and its

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reformation was very widely desired; yet the circumstance that the refusal of the *Parlements* to register an edict was the sole constitutional check on despotism secured perhaps a majority of voices in their favour. The Ministers who had gone thus far should at least have seen the impossibility of retreat and therefore the wisdom of acting with vigour. Yet they did nothing further towards establishing the *Cour Plénière*, but were content to keep the members of the *Parlement* idle at Versailles. Neither Calonne nor Brienne seems ever to have understood the danger of announcing reforms which they were not able or not resolved to carry. These Ministers called every part of the old polity of France in question and then left it little altered. Thus they tutored the French people in revolution.

Even if Brienne could flatter himself that he had overthrown the *Parlement* of Paris, his work was only half done until the edicts had been registered by the provincial *Parlements*. These bodies had been accustomed to obey the political impulse of the Paris *Parlement*. They resented the edicts which, by taking away the power of registration, ended their influence in public affairs, and they saw in the suppression of the *Parlement* of Paris a menace to themselves. Most of the provincial *Parlements* were therefore determined to resist the edicts as long as they could; and their means of resistance were formidable. The distinction between the *noblesse* of the sword and the *noblesse* of the robe, which severed so deeply the courtiers of Versailles from the lawyers of Paris, was much fainter in the Provinces. By birth, by social intercourse, by common interests and prejudices, the members of the provincial *Parlements* were closely bound to the provincial nobility. This nobility, poor and proud, tenacious of its dignity and privileges, had long been ripe for mutiny. It bore a bitter grudge against the grandees who surrounded the King and intercepted his favours. It winced under the despotic sway of Ministers and Intendants. It had lately seen its chances of promotion in the army curtailed for the benefit of the higher nobility, and it now saw its seigniorial jurisdiction assailed by the new edicts. It resolved to stand by the *Parlements* to the last. In some at least of the Provinces, such as Béarn, Britanny, or Dauphiné, the opposition had a peculiarly strong case. For these Provinces had come under the direct sway of the Crown only by virtue of solemn pacts which guaranteed them in the enjoyment of their own laws and institutions. If the new edicts could be shown to infringe these chartered rights, the whole force of provincial patriotism would be enlisted in the Parliamentary opposition.

The middle class at first took little part in resisting the edicts, although the lawyers generally followed their professional superiors. But the provincial nobility had many dependents both in town and country, and did not reflect upon the danger of raising the mob against the government. The Provinces were accordingly foremost in resistance to the royal will. In Béarn the *Parlement* delayed registration as long as

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possible. When it had been suspended from its functions, an insurrection broke out, which was only calmed when the *Parlement* resumed its place and duties. The victorious *Parlement* pronounced its unwilling registration null, and declared all who should assist in executing the edicts to be out of the protection of the law. The government, thus openly defied, would have been content with formal submission; but, as even this was refused, it sent an order for the whole body to appear at Versailles. When they arrived, Brienne's ministry was drawing to a close, and they were sent home without punishment or even rebuke. In Britanny the *Parlement* refused to register the edicts, and the representatives of the three Estates supported its action most strenuously. Bertrand de Molleville, the Intendant, and the Comte de Thiard, the commandant who had been charged with the duty of enforcing registration, were furiously assailed by the mob, while the troops showed an unwillingness to use force which, in a free country, would have been deemed criminal. As in Béarn, so in Britanny, the *Parlement* declared the registration null, and pronounced all who had any concern in the edicts traitors to King and country. The magistrates, it is true, submitted to *lettres de cachet*, exiling them from Rennes. But thereupon the commission of the Estates, which acted for the whole body between its sessions, took up their cause and sent a deputation to remonstrate with the King. The Ministers denied them an audience, and even sent them to the Bastille. This tardy vigour merely produced more deputations. In Dauphiné the *Parlement*, declared that if the edicts were not withdrawn the people would consider themselves released from their allegiance. The government as usual replied with an order for the arrest and exile of the magistrates. Then the populace of Grenoble rose against the garrison, and forced the commandant, the Duc de Clermont-Tonnerre, to restore the magistrates to their places and to confine the soldiers to barracks. The *Parlement*, behaving with unusual decorum, stayed just long enough to calm the multitude, and then quietly withdrew, each man to his appointed place of exile.

In this resistance to the edicts of May we trace two distinct motives, jealousy of provincial privilege and weariness of absolute rule. The edicts taken as a whole embodied a great reform; and it was significant of the time that good laws should excite rebellion among a people which had so often tamely submitted to the worst. The forbearance, nay the weakness, of the Ministers is equally remarkable. They might have taken a higher tone if they could have trusted the army. But the officers, swayed by liberal ideas or by aristocratic sympathies, were almost everywhere unwilling to use force even under the grossest provocation; and where the officers were lukewarm the private soldiers could not be expected to hold out against the multitude. Yet the historian must own that the government of Louis XVI treated rebellion with an indulgence which amounted to abdication. While employing arbitrary

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words and forms inherited from a very different state of society, it showed hesitation and gentleness inconsistent with strong government.

Brienne was as unsuccessful with the clergy as with the lawyers. In May he tried to get an increase in the *don gratuit*. The clergy refused, and chose commissioners to draw up a remonstrance to the King, in which they took the side of the *Parlements* and claimed all their old privileges. This remonstrance was presented in June. In reply a royal decree recognised the immunity of the clergy from taxation. It thus became apparent that the King and the Ministers either did not understand their own policy or were not in earnest with it, since they laid down principles merely to discard them, and ended by confirming the abuses which they had assailed. Had they known it, there was no more to fear from the selfishness of the privileged orders; for the provincial *Parlements* had by this time diffused a spirit of resistance through the whole community, and it was the nation which henceforth had to be considered by the sovereign and his advisers. In Dauphiné this memorable change was first manifested, and the assembly of Vizille marked a further approach towards revolution.

On June 14, 1788, the *noblesse* of Grenoble held a consultation with representatives of the other Orders, and agreed by their own authority to revive the ancient Estates of Dauphiné. The Third Estate was to have as many representatives as the other two, and all were to deliberate and vote in common. The meeting was fixed for July 21, and the resolutions to be proposed were drafted by Jean-Joseph Mounier, a young lawyer of Grenoble, who had distinguished himself in the recent troubles. It is not surprising that the Ministers should have treated this conduct on the part of a number of private men as an act of rebellion and have sent down the Marshal de Vaux with troops to restore order. But the Marshal found such a fierce unanimity in the Province that he deemed it better to consent that the assembly should meet, so long as the meeting was not at Grenoble. The leaders were willing to hold it at Vizille, a few miles distant. On the appointed day nearly five hundred deputies met there, among them Mounier, who was chosen secretary, guided all their proceedings, and may be termed the first parliamentary statesman of the French Revolution. The resolutions now submitted to the assembly condemned the edicts of May, demanded the convocation of the States General and of the Estates in each Province, and required that in the Estates of Dauphiné the Third Estate should have as many representatives as the nobles and clergy together. They also declared that the Estates of Dauphiné would never consent to any taxes not granted by the States General or separate their cause from that of the other Provinces, and insisted upon the abolition of *lettres de cachet*. After the deputies at Vizille had voted these resolutions, and had declared their own assembly permanent until the edicts should have been withdrawn, they adjourned until September 1. The effect of their

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proceedings upon public opinion was incalculable. An entire Province had given itself a political constitution, and had announced its resolve to gain one for the whole kingdom. The deputies had insisted, it is true, upon their provincial rights, but only as a temporary makeshift, and had been careful not to separate the interests of Dauphiné from the interests of France. In the same spirit they had implied, although they had not presumed to assert, that in the national assembly the Third Estate must have a deciding voice. Opposition to arbitrary power was henceforward to be based not upon ancient forms but on modern needs; not on the privileges of any order but on the rights of the people; not on the peculiar laws of a Province but on the common patriotism of all Frenchmen.

Brienne and his colleagues were angry but had neither spirit nor resources to overcome this new opposition. All through the summer deputations, complaints, and protests had been multiplying. The Ministers had tried to silence agitation by a severe decree of Council dated June 28. Only a week later, a new decree betrayed their bewilderment. After observing that the number and qualifications of the electors and the elected, and the procedure of elections for the States General had never been precisely determined, this decree required municipal and other officers to search for documents illustrative of these matters and to send them to the provincial assemblies for consideration and report. It also invited all men of learning to make independent enquiry, and to send the results of their labour to the Keeper of the Seals. By this decree the Ministers doubtless intended to show that they were in earnest, and also to give the public a new theme which might divert them from sedition. But it showed what a venture was made in summoning the States General, and how ill the Ministers understood their own business. Where there was no continuous tradition of parliamentary government, the Crown should have decided doubtful questions with reference to the needs of the age, instead of distracting the public with a useless discussion. Even the decree of July brought no rest to Brienne's ministry. The King, bewildered by the storm, ceased to attend to public business, and spent nearly all his time in hunting. Brienne was worn out; Breteuil resigned; the Treasury was almost empty; and the time seemed close at hand when there would no longer be a government. It was resolved therefore to hasten the assembling of the States General. A decree of August 8 fixed their meeting for May 1, 1789, and suspended the establishment of the *Cour Plénière*.

Even this abridged interval seemed more than France in her existing condition would endure. The ever-increasing agitation, with its occasional outbursts of brutal violence, had checked business; and a very bad harvest announced a season of distress. The government was so poor that even the movement of troops required to maintain order was more than it could well afford. Authority had fallen into such contempt

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that it was more and more difficult to collect the taxes, and the public creditors were now so thoroughly alarmed that to borrow had become impossible. A decree of August 16 announced that for the present a large proportion of the public liabilities would be paid in paper. As the *Caisse d'Escompte* had lent so much of its capital to the Treasury, this decree involved another, giving its notes forced circulation. Thus the deficit with which Louis began his reign had now grown into insolvency. There was only one man in France whose credit could supply the credit of the State or enable the form of government to linger on until May of 1789. Anxious to save Brienne from disgrace, the Queen tried to gain Necker. But Necker would not link his fortunes with an unpopular Minister; and, as Necker alone could find a supply, the King had to dismiss Brienne. He retired on August 25, loaded with favours which would have been ample for the most successful statesman, and which reflect little honour on himself or the King.

Necker now became Minister of Finance, with the style of Secretary of State, and was admitted a member of the Council. The King and Queen, although unfriendly, submitted perforce to all his recommendations. The public were hysterical with delight at his return to power, and the funds rose 30 per cent. But the time was long past when Necker could have restored the vigour of the State; the sovereign had lost his dignity, the people had forgotten to obey, and the common wants of the administration could be met only by daily contrivances. Necker had no other ambition than to reach without further tumult or downright bankruptcy the day on which the States General were to meet. With the help of the financiers who trusted him he scraped together a little money to meet pressing claims; and to improve credit he obtained the recall of the edict enjoining the Treasury to pay its debts partly in paper. In order to shorten the agony he induced the King to declare that the States General should meet in January, 1789; and in order to calm the public, he obtained the dismissal of Lamoignon, the suppression of the new judicial system, and the restoration of the *Parlements* to their old functions. With far less cause than before the *Parlement* resumed its old part of opposition. The mob of Paris, constantly growing more unruly, had wished to celebrate the downfall of Brienne and Lamoignon by burning their houses, and only desisted when Dubois, the commandant of the watch, gave orders for the soldiers to fire. The *Parlement* immediately on its return summoned Dubois to answer at its bar for his conduct, thus setting the precedent so often followed in the Revolution of treating the suppression of savage riot as a crime. But the *Parlement* was speedily punished by the loss of that popularity for which it had laboured so hard. When it registered the decree convoking the States General, it added the condition that they should be held as in 1614, each Order sitting as a separate House and voting separately. This proviso, as enabling the clergy and nobles to

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control everything, was rejected by all who looked for comprehensive reforms. From this time onward the *Parlement* was hardly ever named without reproach, and was ignored in all political combinations. Within three years it was destroyed almost without a voice raised in its behalf.

The King and Necker were hardly wiser than the *Parlement*. In a country unused to free institutions every course was full of danger; but the least dangerous would have been the adoption of principles already applied in the provincial assemblies, double representation of the Third Estate, deliberation in common, and vote by head. Had the Crown boldly accepted these principles, it might have regained much of its lost influence and have exercised a steadying control over the States General. But Necker, afraid to decide, advised the King to reassemble the Notables and to consult them. When they accordingly assembled on November 6, they gave the advice which might have been foretold. Only one *bureau* voted for the double representation of the Third Estate, none for deliberation in common or vote by head; they insisted upon observance of the ancient forms; and their one concession to public opinion was in renouncing all exemptions from taxes. They were dissolved on December 12, after causing some loss of time and helping to diminish Necker's popularity. It was now impossible that the States General should meet before May.

Meanwhile the political leaders of Dauphiné had set forth the demands of the people. We have seen that the irregular assembly of Vizille had adjourned, after presenting to the government a list of reforms amounting to a revolution. Always anxious to conciliate, Necker had sanctioned the renewal of its session, only requiring that it should meet at the little town of Romans, twenty leagues from Grenoble. It met again on September 10. The president named by the Ministers, Lefranc de Pompignan, Archbishop of Vienne, was known for his liberal opinions; yet the president in the former session, the Comte de Morges, declared on behalf of the assembly that they recognised him in that character merely out of respect for the King, and without prejudice to their inherent right to name their own officers — a protest to which the Archbishop himself gave his adhesion. After this display of independence the assembly began to consider the subject to which the Crown had limited its powers, the constitution of the new provincial Estates. It adopted Mounier's proposal that the Estates should consist of one hundred and forty-four deputies, of whom the Third Estate should choose seventy-two, the nobles forty-eight, and the clergy twenty-four. All were to deliberate and vote in common. Yet the plan was in some respects not democratic, since only two places were assigned to *curés*, and these had to be proprietors; while only nobles of one hundred years' standing and a certain property qualification could be elected, and, in the Third Estate, only those who paid a certain sum in taxes could vote, and only those who paid a somewhat larger sum could

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be deputies. The assembly having adjourned, a decree of the Royal Council confirmed the plan with some slight amendments. When the assembly met again in November, it called these amendments in question, as not having been registered in any Court of the Province, and rejected them all, an act which it held to require no confirmation by the Crown, and which no Minister ventured to challenge.

The assembly of Romans also addressed a letter to Necker asking for the double representation of the Third Estate; but on this point, doubtless, Necker had solicited their opinion. A great number of municipal and other assemblies had followed their example. Even the *Parlement* of Paris, in the hope of regaining power, had pronounced for the double representation of the Third Estate, although not for the other demands. Most of the pamphlets which were published at this time in immense numbers enforced the popular view of the question. On the other side the Comte d'Artois and several Princes of the blood addressed to the King a protest against any concession. Necker, who watched the course of public opinion with his usual anxiety to please all parties, was deeply perplexed and at length took a middle course. He advised the King to give the Third Estate double representation, but not to determine the other points. A royal ordinance decided that the deputies to the States General should number at least one thousand; that in distributing representation regard should be had both to population and to taxation; and that the representatives of the Third Estate should equal in number those of the clergy and nobles. The ordinance was prefaced with a report by Necker on the points in dispute, which affords the clearest proof of his inability to divine the future course of events as well as of his wish to please or at least not to offend men of all conditions. Both documents were dated December 27, 1788, and were published under the singular title of "*Résultat du Conseil du Roi.*" At first received with favour, because of the assurance of double representation of the Commons, they were less liked when the public had time to reflect how much they left undecided. The royal letter convoking the States General, and the regulations determining who should possess the franchise and how the deputies should be elected, bore the date of January 24, 1789. All was now ready for the elections, which began a few days later and took several months to complete.

A new series of disorders had sprung from the bad harvest of 1788; and Necker had returned to the practice of regulating the corn trade. In September the export of corn was forbidden. In November corn and flour were forbidden to be sold elsewhere than in markets. The government offered premiums to importers of corn, and even bought corn itself. As usual these measures caused alarm and hampered traffic and deepened the distress which they were meant to relieve. In a country where the government was so much despised and the elements of insurrection were so plentiful, violent outbreaks were sure to follow. They began in

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January, 1789, and as the civil and military authorities were afraid to do their duty, multiplied and became more outrageous. Thus set in the period of disorder caused by scarcity, and of scarcity rendered more acute by disorder, which lasted with intervals for ten years. Things were made worse by the severe winter. All the great rivers of France were frozen, and even the port of Marseilles was covered with ice. Many poor people died of cold and hunger. As usual in France, a time of misery produced tales of Ministers and other great men speculating in food and extracting untold wealth from the starvation of the people. It was under these evil conditions that the elections to the States General were held.

Louis XVI had begun his reign with the best intentions and the fairest hopes. He had always sought for worthy ministers, and had found one or two of uncommon merit. He had at least wished to be humane and frugal, and had made many reforms and some sacrifices. Yet at every step he seemed only to entangle himself in more and more grievous perplexities. In an age of industrial and commercial progress, his revenue seemed to melt away and leave him penniless. His authority at home had sunk, until there was no cheaper way of becoming popular than to defy the Crown. His influence in Europe, despite the most successful war ever waged against the national enemy, had all but vanished. He had abdicated in favour of the *Parlements*, in favour even of the private assembly of Vizille, before abdicating in favour of the nation. Worse still remained behind. He was to lose not only the remnant of prerogative which he still kept, but personal freedom and safety, and after a long train of inconceivable humiliations was to die on the scaffold. Even when we have allowed, and it is fair to make the fullest allowance, for the embarrassments which Louis inherited, we must add that no other reign so forcibly attests the insufficiency in great affairs of good-will unsupported by wisdom or firmness.

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CHAPTER V

THE ELECTIONS TO THE STATES GENERAL

If we would understand the beginnings of the French Revolution we must carefully guard against certain preconceptions. The French of 1789 had no experience of parliamentary institutions, and could not therefore possess the habits and instincts of parliamentary life. The desire for self-government, then so general among the upper classes of France, had been fed by literature and philosophy, not by practice. In the first stage of the French Revolution even the keenest and most judicial minds could little forecast the future; while the general public had no prevision whatever, but lived blindly from day to day. When the King convened the States General, he was unaware that he was making one of the gravest and most hazardous experiments in history. When the States General met, the members hardly suspected the enormous difficulty of their task. When, under their later style of the National Assembly, they gave to France her first Constitution, they did not foresee how that Constitution would operate even for a year. Historians are usually prone to ascribe to human wisdom or cunning much that is the outcome of mere passion, indolence, or want of thought. But nowhere has this fallacy run to wilder extremes than in histories of the French Revolution written not long after the event. Results so wonderful must, it was thought, have been the work of Machiavellian subtlety. The reverse would have been nearer the truth. The results were so strange, because the agents had not even that dim prevision which in ordinary times is possible to public men.

The States General of France bore scarcely any resemblance to the modern English Parliament. They had never outgrown the medieval type of national assembly. The continuous action of the English Parliament had ensured continuous growth and almost unnoticed adjustment to the new conditions of later ages. In France it had been otherwise. While in England during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries a Parliament had been called, as a rule, once a year, and even under the Tudors and Stewarts had met once every few years, the States General in France had been called at most irregular intervals, usually

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long, and tending to grow longer, till after 1614 they were called no more. Therefore they remained to the last what they had been from the first, an assembly of Estates, in which the Clergy, the Nobles, and the Third Estate acted as separate bodies, with separate interests and distinct traditions. The relative intelligence, wealth, and actual power of the different Estates might change; but there was no corresponding change in the constitution of the States General. Meeting so seldom, moreover, the Estates had never been able to define their procedure or to fix their powers. What had been true at first of all medieval parliaments remained true of the States General to the end. The deputies remained agents in relation to their electors, petitioners in relation to the King, and never became senators empowered and obliged to consider the interest of the whole commonwealth and to exercise the discretion of a sovereign legislature.

In relation to their electors the deputies were, we have said, agents. Their task was to state the grievances of the electors to the King, and they had little choice as to the best means of discharging their mission. In every *bailliage* or *sénéchaussée* each of the three Estates drew up a list of grievances known as a *cahier des plaintes et doléances*. Out of these *cahiers* the representatives of that Estate in all the *bailliages* of the Province compiled a provincial *cahier*; and in the States General a committee of each Estate formed out of the provincial *cahiers* a general *cahier* for their own Estate throughout the kingdom, and this *cahier* was then presented to the King. The deputies were bound by these written instructions, and in great measure debarred from making use of the advantages arising from their fuller knowledge and from their position as members of an assembly representing the whole of France.

In relation to the King the deputies were petitioners, not legislators. As in England down to the Lancastrian period, so in France down to the reign of Louis XIII, the Estates petitioned for the redress of grievances, and the King promised redress in return for money or for help in some other form. Whether the King should grant or refuse the whole of what was asked, or grant part and withhold the rest, or grant something different but in his opinion better or more convenient, remained at his own discretion, as it had been at the discretion of the English Kings in the fourteenth century. The Estates had rarely gone so far as to make the grant of supply conditional on the redress of grievances; and therefore the Crown could often evade promising or neglect to fulfil its word. Meantime the original law-making power of the King remained unabated. The form of the law was always, the substance of the law was usually, what the sovereign willed. Few and superficial were the traces left by the activity of the States General upon the law of old France. So likewise the States General never gained the power of the purse. They might grant a supply in exchange for redress of grievances; they never established the maxim that there

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could be no taxation without their consent; and such control over supply as they originally possessed steadily diminished after 1357.

The historic States General of France were therefore an institution compatible with almost absolute monarchy. They did not impose their will upon the sovereign, although they helped him to ascertain public opinion. What the States General would do, when they should meet again after an interval of one hundred and seventy-five years fruitful in change, none could know; and individual wishes or fears determined all surmises. The language of the royal summons was vague and comprehensive. It enjoined that the deputies should be furnished with instructions and powers sufficient to propose, advise, and consent to all that might concern the wants of the State, the reform of abuses, the establishment of a fixed and durable order in all parts of the administration, the general prosperity of the kingdom, and the welfare of each and all of the subjects, and promised on behalf of the King his good-will to observe and execute all that should have been concerted between him and the Estates. These words, liberal as they are, do not exactly ascribe any legislative power to the States General, certainly not that sole legislative power which they afterwards claimed with reference to the Constitution. Louis who, though weak and gentle, believed firmly in his divine right and unlimited prerogative, can hardly have contemplated, certainly did not desire, such a surrender. Probably he attached no very definite meaning to the words placed in his mouth, and expected the States General to show far more deference for ancient usage than Frenchmen in 1789 were disposed to pay. He hoped, in return for limited although substantial reforms — such as the suppression of all immunities from taxation, the transfer of the taxing power to the States General, and guarantees for their periodic meeting — to be set free from his financial embarrassment. Even these reforms would have ended the absolute power of the Crown; but they would have left the King, in a very real sense, head of the State; and beyond these reforms we may feel sure that Louis did not mean to go, or expect to be driven.

Very different were the hopes and resolutions of a great part of the public. The government of France had, as we have seen, lost every shred of authority and was now as much despised as it was disliked. The spirit of criticism which had been gaining strength all through the eighteenth century and the ever-rising discontent with the abuses of the old order had found a practical direction and an immediate object. The most active and aspiring men in the country wanted much more than the redress of particular grievances; they wanted political, and indeed social, reconstruction. The "regeneration of France" was expected from the approaching States General; and inexperience made even so gigantic an undertaking seem easy. The mounting agitation of the public broke forth in such a tumult of

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political discussion as France had never known till now. Newspapers indeed there were none save the official journals. But the pamphlets were counted by hundreds, perhaps by thousands. The government made one feeble attempt to impose silence; but such an attempt was contrary to the invitation which it had addressed to all citizens and to Necker's conciliating policy, and proved altogether ineffectual. For the first time in French history the press was in fact free. All the passions so long restrained found utterance. All the ideas hitherto confined to books or to conversation were hawked about the streets. Men of all opinions wrote; but the partisans of reform wrote most eagerly and copiously. They covered an extraordinary range of topics, but dwelt longest on that which seemed most urgent, the constitution of the approaching States General, above all on the relation of the three Estates. Deliberation in common and vote by head they felt to be necessary for the changes which they all desired. It is true that the clergy and the nobles had very generally intimated a readiness to forego their immunity from taxation; true that for the most part they desired constitutional freedom. But there remained other privileges which they were not disposed to surrender, nor the Third Estate to spare; the freedom which they desired would have been in some measure aristocratic, while France was dominated by democratic theory; and their feudal rights in the soil set them in opposition to the material interests of the bulk of the people.

In the party of reform at this time there was none more conspicuous and there were few more temperate than Jean-Joseph Mounier. Yet Mounier in his *Nouvelles Observations sur les États généraux* poured scorn upon the ancient constitution and procedure of the States General, which reduced the deputies to the business of compiling useless petitions for redress out of the *cahiers* which they had received from their electors. He urged his countrymen to give their representatives the amplest powers, and to regard the *cahiers* merely as means of laying stress upon what was most essential, not as restraints to be imposed on the discretion of legislators. He bade them enjoin upon their representatives the framing of a constitution, but only in a joint assembly of the three Estates. Himself an admirer of the English system, and convinced that two Chambers were necessary to order and freedom, he maintained nevertheless that a constituent assembly must be one and indivisible. To enforce the same moral Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès wrote his famous pamphlet *Qu'est-ce-que le Tiers État?* — which opens with the three well-known questions, "What is the Third Estate? Everything. What has it been until now in the political order? Nothing. What does it ask? To be something." Sieyès sought to put the Third Estate upon its guard against the other two. The reform of abuses, he argued, is hopeless so long as those who profit by them have a veto upon change. Therefore deliberation in common and vote by head are as

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necessary as the double representation of the Third Estate if the States General are to effect any real good. But what is to be done if the clergy and the nobles, entrenching themselves in precedent, hold aloof? In that case, he answered, the Third Estate must go on alone and enact a constitution. After all the Third Estate is the nation, of which the First and Second Estates are small portions, and if its deputies by themselves do not form the States General, they will form a national assembly. Whatever may be thought of the exaggerations and the fallacies in this memorable pamphlet, it made Sieyès famous and powerful. A crowd of inferior though often vigorous writers repeated and enforced the arguments of Mounier and Sieyès.

Along with the serious attempts to influence the electors came forth a swarm of pamphlets and fly-sheets often bearing grotesque titles, such as *Le Gloria in Excelsis du Peuple*, *Le De Profundis de la Noblesse et du Clergé*, *La Semaine Sainte ou les Lamentations du Tiers État*, etc. These were often couched in the highflown strain of passionate sensibility which Rousseau had brought into vogue, and which pervades even the official utterances of that time. Others were steeped in rancour and abounded in suggestions of hatred and revenge. All were thrown to a people naturally excitable, which had suffered, and was suffering much, and which was for the most part ill-educated, wanting in political experience, unused to political discussion, and now thoroughly suspicious and distrustful of its rulers. Such literature could not but exasperate the electors and prompt them in many cases to choose men rather for their vehemence than for their judgment. It even produced some immediate disorder, especially in Paris, where the artificial cheapness of bread and the relief works established at Montmartre had drawn together thousands who could not or would not earn their living at home, and where the mob was reinforced by many vagrants and ruffians from all the surrounding Provinces. The conservative party also had recourse to the press, but their pamphleteers were inferior in talent, in confidence, and in numbers. Their writings fell comparatively flat, for they could not promise to the general public more than a part of what it was resolved to take, whereas the liberals were in the first flush of a sanguine hope, which was not the less sincere because it was very often unreasonable.

Accustomed as we are in a free country to watch the currents of public opinion, we must be surprised that the King and his Ministers took no heed of the growing commotion in France. They ought to have seen, we think, that the new States General would differ from all previous assemblies of the kind, and would require to be managed in a new way. Apparently they saw nothing. Louis spent his time mostly in field sports, and left to Necker, whom he disliked, the responsibility of guiding the State through the crisis. Necker, conscious of the royal

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disfavour, harassed by the cabals of the courtiers, unversed in politics as distinct from finance, and afraid of injuring his reputation, remained passive. The honest and sagacious Malouet tells us in his *Memoirs* that he tried to stir Necker to action. He called on him to make at least an effort towards guiding public opinion, instead of waiting for its force to sweep him away. Before the elections took place, Malouet insisted, everything ought to be considered and determined in the royal Council. The ministers should decide what they could not decently defend and what they might safely abandon. They should take large account of the wants and wishes of the public. Already the commons had risen to equal power with the nobles and the clergy; and privileges oppressive to the commons were therefore certain to be abolished. On these principles the Ministers should settle their plan of concessions and reforms. They should then by every honest and lawful means recommend this programme to the electoral assemblies as the model of their *cahiers*, and put forward as candidates respectable men who would adhere to the programme. Necker only replied that it was neither decorous nor safe for Ministers to interfere in any way whatever. Malouet urged that, without the initiative of the Ministers, nothing but confusion could be expected from an assembly of twelve hundred inexperienced men, drawn from all classes and swayed by the most discordant passions. But he argued in vain. With Necker, and with Armand-Marc Montmorin, the Minister next in consequence to himself, the fear of taking a decisive part silenced all considerations of true prudence. The Revolution was fated to run its course, uncontrolled by any statesmanlike direction.

The government thus left the field open for eager partisans who undertook the guidance of the electors. They drew up model *cahiers* and had them printed and circulated by thousands or sent in manuscript to the electors for whom they were intended. They composed manuals for electors, such as the instructions sent by the Duke of Orleans relating to the States General, and the resolutions to be taken in the assemblies of the *bailliages* drawn up by Sieyès.

The royal letter of convocation and the regulations of January 24 had followed precedent as far as possible and had tried to reproduce the order observed in the election of the States General of 1614. Such, however, had been the changes in that long interval that strict imitation was impossible. The antiquated *bailliages* and *sénéchaussées* were taken as the electoral divisions. Those which had been formed since 1614 and had never, therefore, returned deputies to the States General, were now described as secondary and annexed to older *bailliages* and *sénéchaussées*. In Provinces where these divisions had almost disappeared or had never been established they were now defined in a somewhat arbitrary manner. In the *pays d'états* the provincial Estates had usually claimed the right of choosing the deputies for the Province;

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but this precedent was now set aside, save in the case of Dauphiné, where the revived Estates had taken the duty upon themselves. In old times it was the cities which had constituted the Third Estate; but now all cities, even the greatest, were merged in the *bailliage* or *sénéchaussée*. Paris alone was treated from the first as a separate electoral division; although a few other cities, Arles, Metz, Valenciennes, and Strasbourg, afterwards obtained the same favour on grounds peculiar to themselves.

The franchise was very generously defined by the regulations. In the First Estate it was enjoyed not only by the superior clergy but by all parish priests and curates, not however in the same way or in the same degree. Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots and beneficed clergymen, appeared in person at the electoral assembly. Each Chapter was to choose one elector for every ten Canons; and one elector for every twenty of its members below the rank of Canon. Religious Houses of either sex were to be represented each by a single elector. In towns, the clergymen without benefice were to choose electors in the proportion of one to every twenty. Country *curés* were entitled to vote, but subject to a proviso that, if their parish were more than two leagues distant from the town in which the assembly of the *bailliage* or *sénéchaussée* was held, they could vote only by a proctor, unless they had an assistant to supply the spiritual wants of the parishioners in their absence. It was, perhaps, expected that such *curés* would name as proctors some of the superior clergy; but they usually preferred men of their own rank; and this proviso had little influence on the results of the elections.

In the Second Estate the suffrage was universal and practically equal. Every noble born or naturalised as a Frenchman, and twenty-five years of age, was summoned to the assembly of the *bailliage* or *sénéchaussée* where he had his domicile. He could give only one vote in that assembly; but if he possessed a fief elsewhere he might appoint a proxy to vote in the *bailliage* where it was situated. Minors and women holding fiefs might also vote by proxy. All the nobles, save in Paris, chose their representatives in the States General by direct election.

In the Third Estate the suffrage was not far short of universal. Every Frenchman born or naturalised, twenty-five years of age or upwards, and inscribed on the register of taxes, might vote. Thus every owner of land, however petty the holding, was admitted. All professional men, all men of business, and all workmen who were members of corporations and paid the *taille d'industrie*, had a voice in the elections. Roughly it may be said that only the poorest labourers and downright paupers were excluded from the franchise. Against this it must be set that the elections of the Third Estate were indirect, in two, three, or even four stages. The procedure must appear in English eyes extremely complex. In every town the members of each gild met to choose deputies in the ratio of one to every hundred of their number; and

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the corporations termed "of liberal arts" chose deputies in the ratio of two for every hundred. Other inhabitants paying taxes chose deputies in the latter proportion; and then all three classes of deputies met to form the assembly of the Third Estate for that town, and chose its representatives in the assembly of the *bailliage*. In each rural parish the qualified inhabitants chose two deputies for every two hundred households, and an additional deputy for each hundred households after the first two. These rural deputies, together with the deputies chosen in the towns, formed the preliminary assembly of the Third Estate for the *bailliage*. Where two or more *bailliages* were grouped as principal and secondary, the assembly of each *bailliage* reduced itself to one-fourth of its original number. Where a *bailliage* stood alone, its reduction was not enforced; but its assembly, if upwards of two hundred, had to be reduced to that figure. When all these elections and reductions had been finished, the general assembly of the Third Estate in each electoral division was complete and ready to act.

The forms of election were no less curious and antique. When the electing bodies of the three Estates had been formed, the *grand bailli* or *grand sénéchal* of the district summoned them all to the general assembly of the three Estates, held usually in the largest church of the town where he had his official seat. After hearing mass together, the electors were called over by Estate, by locality, and by name, and took an oath to execute their task faithfully. The *bailli* or *sénéchal* then asked the members of each Estate whether they would draw up their *cahier* and elect their representatives separately or jointly with the rest. Each Estate considered this question apart and usually resolved on separate action. Then the clergy resorted to the Bishop's palace, the nobles to the Governor's house, and the Third Estate to the town-hall. The Bishop presided over the clerical assembly, the *grand bailli* or *sénéchal* over the nobles, and the lieutenant-general of the *bailliage* over the Third Estate. When the *cahiers* had been settled and the deputies chosen, the *bailli* or *sénéchal* called a new assembly of the three Estates. Again mass was celebrated; the Bishop and the *bailli* or *sénéchal* harangued the assembly; the names of the persons chosen were announced, and they swore to make known in the States General the contents of the *cahiers* entrusted to them and to obey the instructions which they had received. With this ceremony the business of the election was complete, and the electors returned home.

As a rule the assemblies chose a substitute to take the place of each deputy, should death, accident, or illness hinder him from performing his duty; and this precaution was afterwards approved by royal decree. Many difficulties arose in the course of the elections through the variety of local usages and institutions with which the general rules laid down by the government would not accord. In these cases special regulations had to be made; and discontent was often expressed. Even so, many

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details were not settled; and some trouble was occasioned by the inexperience of the electors. As might be inferred from the low qualification and the public excitement, the number of persons who recorded their votes was enormous — according to Jean-Paul Rabaut de St Étienne, about six millions; but this total, perhaps equal to that of all the adult males in France, must be excessive, for there were some districts, such as the Limousin, where Turgot's reforms are said to have diffused contentment among the country people, in which many failed to vote. In Angoumois we are told there were instances where beggars, and even women, took part in the elections. But as the system of indirect election prevented large assemblies in any one place, the deputies of the Third Estate were chosen with very little disorder.

The conduct of the government of Louis XVI in the memorable elections of 1789 has often been arraigned by writers of the most opposite parties. Some have severely blamed the admission to the franchise of so many poor and ignorant persons who could not be expected to choose fit representatives. A property qualification, it is said, should have been required in the Third Estate. Whatever may be thought of this criticism, no such qualification had been required in the past, when the Third Estate had usually comprised only the burgesses of the towns. Nor would it have been easy to fix a reasonable qualification in landed property. If it had been put low, it would have admitted the class of petty proprietors, already amounting to millions, which suffered most from the abuses of the old order and, as the event showed, was the most ripe for violent and destructive action. In that case the result of the elections would have been little improved. If the qualification had been put high, it would have excluded almost the whole of this class, which would have been unfair and dangerous. It was the misfortune of France, not the fault of Louis or of Necker, that an agricultural middle class did not exist in most Provinces. Other writers have asserted that the franchise was given to the crowd of peasants in the hope of overwhelming the intelligent and liberal citizens of the towns and thus thwarting reform. But this seems a malicious refinement suggested by the use which later rulers of France have sometimes made of the peasant vote. There is no real evidence that the government of Louis XVI understood such a manœuvre or, in conferring the franchise so freely, had any thought other than the one alleged, of enabling the whole people to state its grievances.

It has been made a reproach that the various electoral assemblies were not allowed to elect their presiding officers, who were designated by the regulations; in the *bailliage* or *sénéchaussée* the *bailli* or *sénéchal*, in towns various municipal officers, in rural parishes the judge of the *seigneur*. In the last instance the complaint seems grounded, since the manorial judge might have the means of exerting undue influence on the peasants; but in the other cases the grievance seems unreal. It was

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never thought to prejudice freedom of election in England that the sheriff should be the returning officer in counties or the mayor in boroughs; although the sheriff was a royal officer and the mayor in many cases the representative of a very few citizens. Even writers most prejudiced against the monarchy have been forced to allow that the elections of 1789 were free from military or official constraint, and pure from corruption and intimidation to a degree never again known for many years. The immemorial government of old France lacked that peculiar cunning which so many of its short-lived successors learnt in the fierce struggle for existence. Louis was too easy-tempered, Necker too upright and too anxious about his good name, and all who were most opposed to change too childishly ignorant of the forces which they had to resist, for any serious attempt to bribe or frighten electors. As for the civil and military officers immediately charged with the maintenance of order, it was never by action, always by omission, that they offended at this critical time.

The uniformity of procedure and the quiet of the elections were in several cases disturbed by party divisions in the *pays d'états*. In these Provinces the Estates had usually chosen the deputies to the States General. But the Estates were at this moment viewed with very different feelings by different classes. As a rule the *pays d'états* were attached to their ancient liberties, which had ensured them a milder administration than was known in the *pays d'élection*. The new provincial assemblies, although framed on more liberal principles than the historic Estates, did not win much affection, because the original members were chosen by the Crown, and the elective principle was to be introduced only by degrees. Thus the Provinces which had once possessed Estates wished to revive them, and those which had never possessed Estates wished to secure them. But in the Provinces which had never lost their Estates the old attachment was impaired by a new democratic feeling. Much as they varied in constitution from Province to Province, the Estates had almost everywhere an aristocratic character which no longer contented the Third Estate. While, therefore, the members of the Estates were usually disposed to insist upon their prerogative of electing deputies to the States General, the aggrieved class usually welcomed the royal regulations by which that prerogative was ignored. These various feelings led to several defects or anomalies in the elections.

In the little province of Béarn, which to the last bore itself as a kingdom united to France upon equal terms, the Estates denounced the royal regulations and declared any election made in conformity with them null and void. Here a national sentiment supported the protest, so that no representatives from Béarn appeared at the opening of the States General. In Britanny it was otherwise. All ranks had joined to resist Brienne's measures and had carried their resistance to the verge of

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rebellion. But now Brienne had been driven from power, Necker had done everything to soothe the Bretons and the Estates had been convoked for the end of December. Thereupon a new conflict began between the nobles and commons of Britanny. For the Estates of Britanny were so constituted as to give the First and Second Estates an entire mastery over the Third; and, if the Estates were to elect the deputies, the Third Estate would scarcely have any voice in the election. The nobles and clergy stood upon the historic right of the Estates; the commons resisted; and both parties appealed to the Crown. The debate grew so hot that the government tried to restore peace by suspending the session of the Estates. The clergy and nobles continued to sit in defiance of its orders, while the Third Estate in Rennes and the other towns of the Province formed a confederation to maintain their cause. Then savage riots broke out in Rennes between the aristocrats and the democrats. The regulations of January 24, which decided the issue in a popular sense, were welcomed by the Third Estate, but were denounced as tyrannical by the nobles and the superior clergy. Finally the Third Estate chose its deputies in the manner prescribed; the inferior clergy met in diocesan assemblies for the same purpose; and the nobles and the superior clergy, refusing to elect, remained without a voice in the States General, thus weakening the conservative party by thirty suffrages. In Languedoc and Burgundy little difficulty was felt, as precedents were in favour of direct election to the States General. But in Provence the Estates, which had been lately restored and were eminently aristocratic in character, gave Mirabeau his first opportunity as a defender of popular rights. Here too the government decided that the people, not the Estates, should elect the deputies; and the Estates, though with an ill grace, submitted.

In Dauphiné the elections took a form absolutely peculiar. The assembly of Romans, after settling the constitution of the provincial Estates, had gone on of its own authority to fix the method by which the deputies of Dauphiné in the States General should be chosen. The Estates were to double themselves by the election of one hundred and forty-four members for this purpose only, and the whole body was then to elect the representatives of each of the Orders. The revived Estates met on December 1, 1788, and proceeded early in January to elect the deputies. They adopted a resolution drawn by Mounier enjoining the deputies to record no vote on any other subject until the double representation of the Third Estate, joint deliberation, and vote by head had been secured. These extraordinary proceedings in Dauphiné cast a strange light upon the condition of France in 1789. An assembly at first without a vestige of lawful power had given the province a new constitution, and had determined how its deputies to the States General should be chosen. In the one instance it had overruled, in the other instance it had forestalled the will of the government. In

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neither case had the government presumed to resist or even to blame this usurpation. The impotence of the sovereign and the dissolution of the kingdom could not be more clearly shown.

The elections were held in Paris later than anywhere else. In this delay some have seen the subtle policy of Ministers, anxious to prevent the capital of France and centre of European civilisation from taking its proper place at the head of the great revolutionary movement; and the suspicion might seem plausible, if we merely remembered that Paris soon became the focus of rebellion and remained for nearly a hundred years the constant anxiety of the different governments that have ruled over France. But it may be safely affirmed that early in 1789 few men thought of Paris as a dangerous city. If anywhere in France, the conservative forces might have been thought to be strong in Paris. A capital must always contain a larger proportion of the upper class; and even the vices of government may stimulate the prosperity of a capital. In Paris a vast number of the inhabitants either held places in connexion with the *Parlement*, or ministered to the pleasures of the rich of all nations who even then abounded there. The citizens of Paris suffered little from the tax-gatherer, and nothing from feudal rights. The fortunes of Paris and the monarchy had hitherto been inseparable; and every annexation of territory, every encroachment on local independence, had brought gain to Paris. A city of seven hundred thousand inhabitants was kept in order by two regiments of infantry and a singularly weak police. The elections were delayed merely because the government wished as far as possible to observe ancient claims of right. The Provost of the Merchants who, although a royal nominee, represented the municipality of Paris as it then stood, and the Provost of the City, who was more directly the King's representative, disputed the right of presiding over the election; nor was it until much paper had been blotted and many weeks spent that a regulation of March 28, supplemented by another of April 13, gave the preference to the Provost of the City and settled the manner of the elections.

Ten deputies were assigned to the clergy, ten to the nobles, and twenty to the Third Estate. Owing to the size of Paris, the principle of indirect election was enforced for all three Orders. The clergy alone held a single general assembly, to choose one hundred and fifty electors who were to elect its deputies. For the nobles, Paris was divided into twenty departments. Departmental assemblies were to choose one hundred and fifty noble electors. Thus the nobles of Paris, alone in France, were deprived of the right of directly choosing their representatives in the States General. The Third Estate was to choose three hundred electors in the assemblies of sixty districts newly formed for that purpose. The Provost of Paris was to convoke the first two Orders, and the Provost of the Merchants was to convoke the assemblies of the

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Third Estate. The qualification of voters in this Estate was so far peculiar that persons not members of any gild or corporation were not entitled to vote unless they paid six *livres* of *capitation*. But this requirement was so easily satisfied that the electors of Paris in 1789 have been estimated at sixty thousand. Strong protests were made against the regulations on three grounds: first, that the presidents of the electoral assemblies were servants of the Crown; secondly, that the nobles did not choose their deputies directly, as elsewhere; and thirdly, that the three Estates did not meet in one assembly as the commune of Paris for the joint election of their representatives. As time pressed, however, the citizens contented themselves with protesting.

The clergy of Paris showed a temper which may be explained by the fact that Paris was the centre of anti-clerical feeling. Their *cahier*, though fairly liberal in its political clauses, betrayed a bitter religious intolerance; and all their ten deputies, headed by the Archbishop of Paris, were highly conservative.

The electors of the *noblesse* had taken upon themselves to add to their number all the supplementary members chosen by the primary assemblies, and then numbered two hundred and eight. Ten holders of fiefs within the walls were admitted to vote in their own right. The ten noble deputies were all of a liberal complexion. Among them may be noted the Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre, the Comte de Lally Tollendal, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, Adrien Duport, who became conspicuous among the radicals of the National Assembly, and Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau, who lived to be a Jacobin martyr. The *cahier* entrusted to these deputies was remarkable in the extent of the reforms which it demanded. Nowhere else did the nobles live so much in the current of new ideas as in Paris. Nowhere else was theoretical liberalism, at least, so fashionable. Nowhere else were social barriers more easily surmounted than in Paris, where new men were always rising and the power of intelligence and of wealth, as distinct from rank, was most fully manifested.

The Third Estate did not at first display any uncommon ardour. No doubt some felt the glow described by Bailly. "When I found myself in the midst of the assembly of my district," he writes, "I thought that I breathed a new air; it was strange to be something in the political order, and in virtue of one's simple quality of citizen of Paris." Yet Bailly noted that the attendance was not very full. "In those early times we were wont to count upon a great energy in the Provinces, and perhaps upon the slackness of the city of Paris." It appears that, out of possibly sixty thousand persons qualified, not more than twelve thousand recorded their votes. The electors of the Third Estate, using the same freedom as the electors of the *noblesse*, raised their number to four hundred and seven. Of these, one hundred and seventy were lawyers; one hundred and thirty-seven merchants, shopkeepers, or artisans; thirty-

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two belonged to the official class; and the rest might be regarded as professional men or men of letters. When the primary elections had been completed and the electors of the Third Estate had met, it was proposed that they should draw up their *cahier* jointly with the other two orders; but the proposal was negatived, and things took their usual course. The electors declined to allow any official presidency, choosing as their president Target, a lawyer, afterwards conspicuous in the National Assembly, and as their secretary Jean-Sylvain Bailly, the eminent astronomer, destined to a brief popularity and a tragic death. It is needless to say that all the deputies of the Third Estate were men zealous for reform. Out of the twenty, nine were lawyers, six were merchants or men of business, one was a doctor, one a receiver-general of finance, one an academician, and two were authors. The academician was Bailly, who headed the list. One of the authors was Sieyès, whose services to the Third Estate were held to outweigh the irregularity of choosing a clergyman. The business of electing these deputies was not begun till a week after the States General had met at Versailles. It was not until May 25 that the deputies of Paris joined their colleagues. The electors of Paris constituted themselves a permanent assembly to correspond with their representatives — an irregular though not an unexampled proceeding, which had memorable consequences.

As the elections drew to a close and the composition of the approaching States General and the nature of the *cahiers* became known, the Ministers had a last chance of taking the initiative in the revolution. Malouet, who had warned Necker and Montmorin before, was so much alarmed at the rising commotion of the public that he made another effort to rouse the Ministers to action. He implored them to condense into a programme the proposals common to most of the *cahiers* and thus put themselves at the head of the main body of opinion. It is true that he took as the type of the *cahiers* that which he had induced his own electors at Riom to accept and which expressed the wishes of the Third Estate in their most moderate form. So little, however, did Necker or Montmorin understand the real drift of the time that they objected to Malouet the danger of alienating the nobles and the clergy from the Crown by too much concession to the people. Necker overrated his popularity so much as to think that he could hold the balance between parties in the assembly. But Necker must not bear all the blame. Even had he understood the peril, he could not have induced the King to yield all that most of the *cahiers* of the Third Estate demanded. Louis had no penetration; he distrusted Necker; and he was ever open to the solicitation and intrigue of those who hoped to drive Necker from office. Thus the government could do nothing but passively await the onset of reforming zeal. We must add that this helplessness was approved by men of the most conflicting politics. Malouet found to his amazement that the most reasonable

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persons in all parties thought that the King should propose no plan, but should simply wait for the resolutions of the States General. The more stubborn of the nobles and clergy denied to the King any power to modify the old constitution. The democrats maintained that a constitution could be made only by the deputies of the people.

When the States General were complete, they numbered 308 clergymen, 285 nobles, and 621 representatives of the Third Estate — a total of 1214. Among the ecclesiastical members only one-third belonged to the higher ranks, including 46 prelates and 55 *abbés*, and only 7 were monks, a singular proof of the unpopularity of the regulars, even in their own profession. The remaining two-thirds were *curés*, generally ill-disposed towards their superiors and well-disposed towards the Third Estate. The clergy, thus divided, could ill repel any attack upon its privileges. Among the nobles 265 belonged to the *noblesse* of the sword and only 20 to the *noblesse* of the robe. The heads of the legal profession and the members of the superior Courts, in some respects the most conservative of the nobility, were therefore but slightly represented in the States General. The *noblesse* of the sword comprised 125 nobles of the Court and 140 provincial nobles. Here also was a feud only less bitter than the feud which paralysed the clergy. Among the deputies of the Third Estate were three or four ecclesiastics like Sieyès and 15 nobles, of whom Honoré de Mirabeau is the best known. There were about a score of royal and a somewhat larger number of municipal officers. Merchants, bankers, and citizens of independent fortune numbered about 130. There were about 15 doctors, and about 40 peasants or farmers. But most numerous among the deputies were the lawyers. There were about 150 persons holding various places in the judicial system, and upwards of 210 barristers, notaries, and other members of the legal profession. More than half of the deputies of the Third Estate were therefore lawyers, who represented as a rule not the conservatism of the *Parlements*, but the angry discontent of the middle class, and had as little in common with the chiefs of the profession as the *curés* had with the Bishops.

If we consider the representatives of the Third Estate as a whole, we must acknowledge that they were men of respectable character and good education, steeped in the fashionable philosophy, especially in the writings of Rousseau, proud of their intelligence, industry, and orderly lives, and resentful of the arrogance and frivolity of the nobles, inexperienced, sanguine, and full of dogma. The unhappy mutual alienation of classes in France, and the social barrier between town and country, denied any adequate representation of that part of the commons whose minds had been enlarged by commerce and industry on a grand scale, and who might have been cautious because they had everything to lose by rashness. In old France the lawyers were almost

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the only class of educated laymen other than nobles to be found in the country districts; and therefore the country lawyers had an excessive sway in the National Assembly. The keenest of all the adverse critics of the Revolution has marked this weakness. "The general composition," Burke wrote, "was of obscure provincial advocates, of stewards of petty local jurisdictions, country attornies, and the whole train of the ministers of municipal litigation, the fomentors and conductors of the petty war of village vexation. From the moment I read the list, I saw distinctly and very nearly as it has happened, all that was to follow."

In the actual course of events the Orders were merged, and the *curés* gave the Third Estate a decisive majority. From a body thus composed we might expect alertness in discovering abuses and zeal to remedy them, but scarcely any large or deliberate wisdom. We could not hope for a wide outlook upon society, or for tact or patience in dealing with vast and complex interests. Nor could the other Estates supply what was wanting to the commons. Many of the nobles and some of the superior clergy were full of generous and humane enthusiasm; but they were also without political experience. The rancour between classes abated their influence in the assembly, and the unfortunate legislation regarding the Church at length drove almost all clergymen into opposition. The National Assembly contained many excellent members of committee, but very few statesmen, and to them it rarely listened. No wonder, therefore, that it should have made many good laws, but have failed entirely to govern.

But the members of the States General, as we have seen, were not left to the guidance of their own judgment. They bore written instructions which were singularly full and precise. In order to understand their action we must begin with analysing their *cahiers*.

The value of the *cahiers* of 1789 to the historian of the French Revolution has long been acknowledged. It is true that the States General of that year met under circumstances and were moved by an impulse differing from anything known before and that they did not consider themselves bound by their instructions so straitly as did their medieval predecessors. Yet it remains true that the National Assembly accomplished almost nothing which was not suggested in one or other of the *cahiers*. All its most memorable enactments, even those most doubtful on the score of wisdom or of justice, were forestalled in some *cahiers* at least of the Third Estate. Instructions so full and precise necessarily had weight with the deputies; partly because tradition, as we have said, pointed that way and deputies to the States General had always been regarded more as agents or as messengers than as senators; partly because the political theory then in fashion, the theory of Rousseau, placed sovereign power exclusively in the general body of the citizens; partly because political inexperience hindered the public

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from seeing how unwise it was to bind legislators too tightly and thus preclude them from feeling their joint responsibility for the welfare of all France.

The *cahiers* are of two kinds. First there are those of each of the three Estates in the different *bailliages* and *sénéchaussées*. The clergy and the nobles respectively drew up in each case a *cahier*, which they entrusted to their deputies. But the *cahier* of the Third Estate was compounded out of those drawn up by the primary assemblies of the different towns and parishes. These last, numbering many thousands, have never been published as a whole; but so many have been printed that we can form a very good opinion of their character. They are far more varied and they go much more into detail, than the *cahiers* finally drawn up for the *bailliages*. Upon the whole they give a keener sense of reality. In order to decide finally upon the historical worth of either class of *cahier*, we must, however, trace the method by which they were compiled.

The *cahiers* were very generally composed upon certain patterns circulated through France at the time of the elections. To the influence of these models we may partly ascribe the surprising uniformity in the *cahiers*. It is true that their scope is boundless. In one or other almost every conceivable thing is demanded, from a declaration of the rights of man down to a better distribution of the lamps in the streets of Paris. Yet, when we put aside grievances merely local or trivial, for which redress is sought from the State merely because it had undertaken to regulate everything, and crotchets which an individual or a clique has persuaded the neighbours to adopt, we are impressed with a certain monotony in the *cahiers*. It is not an absolute monotony; there are differences in form and substance corresponding to the differences in character, intelligence, occupations, and interests between different bodies of electors. We can see that the models were most effective by way of suggestion; we cannot assert that they were blindly followed. We may suppose that they exerted upon the draftsmen of the *cahiers* the same kind of influence which the political programme adopted by party chiefs exerts upon the election addresses of their followers. The models were meant to embody the supposed wishes of the bulk of the French nation; and each neighbourhood learnt, sometimes perhaps with surprise, what its wishes were. To be more precise in judgment would, with our information, be hazardous.

We may next enquire who drew up the individual *cahiers*. The *cahiers* of the *bailliages* and *sénéchaussées* were in all cases drawn up by educated men, those of the Third Estate usually by professional men, members of an intelligent, ambitious, discontented middle class, who had read Montesquieu, Rousseau, and the Physiocrats — men steeped in the new ideas of the age, whose workmanship gave a fresh degree of uniformity to the *cahiers*, because this class throughout France was really very

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much the same and formed one naturally coherent party. The *cahiers* of the villages and country towns were the work of men of every degree of cultivation. Sometimes — but this was rare — they were drawn up by a man of letters or an Economist, who lived in the country; and then they display a logical symmetry and literary elegance which the Academy might have condescended to applaud, and which must have astonished the petty farmer or shopkeeper. More often they were the work of such professional men as the country-side could afford, the notary or the *curé*, whose imperfect culture betrays itself in overcharged or even grotesque rhetoric. Sometimes — but this is not common — they seem to be the actual composition of humble folk, who could not frame a sentence or even spell correctly. The little towns or villages occasionally, no doubt, saved themselves all further trouble by adopting in gross one of the models then circulating through France, or an elaborate *cahier* drawn up for a neighbouring *commune* by some inhabitant of unusual influence or ability. In all these ways it happened that the statement of grievances put forth on behalf of the common people was not the work exactly of the common man. But this must always be the case; and here again we are not entitled to suppose that it was drawn up regardless of the real feelings of those whose grievances it rehearsed, or that they exerted no choice as to the form which it took. Once more we have to strike a balance between that which the people gave and that which was given to them.

Upon the whole, then, the uniformity of the *cahiers* is a proof, though not an absolute proof, of the general emotion which then pervaded the greater part of the French people. When trying to estimate the truthfulness of the *cahiers* we must remember that the public were invited to complain, in which case complaint will always be loud and bitter; and no man better knows how to complain than the small farmer struggling with taxes, tithes, and manorial dues. The *cahiers* are not to be viewed as a dispassionate account of old French society in all its good as well as in its evil aspects. They are statements of grievances, and thus record solely what was bad or was thought to be so. We must allow, too, for the style of expression then current with all who read and wrote. Rousseau had brought sensibility into fashion, and he who would be thought a man of virtue had to live in a laboured state of tenderness. In the *cahiers* of 1789 we are often vexed with that vague and tearful rhetoric which flowed so copiously in all the assemblies of the Revolution. But we often read also the touching complaints of those who really worked and really suffered. In short, no summary judgment can be passed upon this enormous mass of documents. The *cahiers* are not to be read with blind assurance of their constant and literal truth; and still less are they to be lightly cast aside as the device of professional agitators. When all allowances have been made, they show how much was amiss in France; and they show what reforms were desired by Frenchmen.

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In so far as purely political change is demanded, the *cahiers* of all three Estates have much in common. All ranks and conditions of men were weary of despotism. The nobles and the clergy no less than their inferiors desired a balance of powers, a constitution. It is true that the *cahiers* of the First and Second Estates often imply that a constitution already exists, and has only to be restored and strengthened, while the *cahiers* of the Third Estate usually assume that a constitution has to be made. The difference was full of meaning, for the clergy and nobles desired a somewhat aristocratic liberty, which could only be based on tradition and precedent, since it was not in accord with the spirit of the time or the wish of the majority. They wanted to limit the power of the Crown, without losing their distinctive privileges, and did not know that the Crown was less unpopular than themselves. The Third Estate preferred to ignore the old institutions of France as never expressly approved by the people, and so leave the legislature free to mould the constitution to meet their wishes. Their *cahiers* often imply that the States General are to make the new constitution, thus putting the King on one side and leaving him a mere provisional sovereign until the new order is established.

That part of the *cahiers* which refers to the constitution usually begins with demanding that the government of France be declared a hereditary monarchy, descending to the males of the House of Bourbon; and this is indeed the one part of the actual system which it is desired to preserve. The States General are to be convoked at regular intervals, the persons of their members are to be inviolable, and their debates are to be public. We often meet with the demand that the States General should not be dissolved without their own consent. The executive power is to remain with the King, but the taxing power is to be in the Estates, and is taken to include the control of loans and what in England is known as the appropriation of supply. The legislative power is to belong to the Estates acting jointly with the King. As a rule it is not proposed to leave the King any initiative in legislation, and some *cahiers* would allow him only a suspensive veto upon measures which have been passed by the National Assembly. But the ministers are to be appointed and dismissed by the King, for they are the organs of the executive power which resides in him. We find in the *cahiers* no inkling of the cabinet system, which was already at work in England, although as yet inperfect and not clearly apprehended even by the acutest political writers. The maxim of Montesquieu that the only security for freedom is the separation of the executive and legislative powers, which was then hardly questioned even in England, which has left its impress on the constitution of the United States, and which was received by Frenchmen smarting under the evils of unlimited monarchy as absolute truth, was destined to give a very unfortunate bias to the law-making of the revolutionary period. The *cahiers*, it is true, insist upon the

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responsibility of ministers to the law and to the nation. But the responsibility which they contemplate is always criminal. They all demand that a minister who has broken the law shall undergo the penalty of the law. Political responsibility, the liability of a minister to lose his place as soon as he loses the confidence of Parliament, is so far from their intention that they generally demand the exclusion of ministers from that assembly.

Together with the remodelling of the national government the *cahiers* desire the remodelling of provincial and municipal institutions, which are all to become elective. The reforms of Necker and Brienne in this field are not condemned, but they are not thought sufficient. It is sometimes expressly said, and it is often clearly meant, that the whole of the ancient bureaucratic system, the Intendants and all their staff, should be abolished. The difficulty attending such a complete revolution in old habits and feelings seems not to have occurred to those who drew the *cahiers*. The necessity of subordinating the municipal to the national authorities was also forgotten. Both of these oversights were repeated in the Constitution of 1791.

The *cahiers* do not merely seek to divide the powers of government; they are equally concerned to insist upon the liberties of the citizen. Many of them demand a formal declaration of the rights of man as the preface to the new constitution. All classes in France fervently desired what an eminent English jurist terms "the reign of law," the supremacy of general rules instead of the ever-varying discretion of the sovereign and his ministers. The right of personal freedom is claimed with touching emphasis. The suppression of extraordinary tribunals and arbitrary arrest is loudly called for. Imprisonment by *lettre de cachet* is universally denounced, although many *cahiers* are disposed to allow it under certain safeguards where the honour and happiness of families are imperilled by the misconduct of an individual. The right of property is asserted with almost equal vigour. It is involved in the demands that taxation should be uniform, that ground should not be taken for public works without punctual payment in full, and that the fund-holders should be satisfied. But the hatred called forth by arbitrary government is most vehemently expressed in certain demands affecting the army. Some *cahiers* ask that the foreign corps, which formed so considerable a part of the French army, should be disbanded. Many *cahiers* wish to deprive the ministers of all control over the troops in favour of the municipal authorities or to make the soldier swear that he will never use his arms against his fellow-citizens. Frenchmen had felt the sting of despotism; they did not know how soon they were to feel the more cruel torment of anarchy.

Where the *cahiers* of the clergy and nobles usually differ from the *cahiers* of the commons, is in wishing to preserve the distinctive character of the three Estates. The two Orders wish the national assembly to

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remain an assembly of Estates; and with hardly an exception they wish each Estate to form an independent Chamber, deliberating and voting by itself. They would retain most of the ancient privileges, save the exemption from taxes, which is generally renounced; while the *cahiers* of the Third Estate claim substantial equality, above all free admission to every preferment civil, military, and ecclesiastical. Still more urgently do they insist upon deliberation in common and vote by head in the approaching States General. Forestalling the march of events, the Third Estate of Dijon intimates that in case of resistance, the representatives of the commons should join with such nobles or clergymen as may be willing to form a national assembly and remodel the State by their own authority. All three Estates desired political freedom and self-government; but the First and Second desired an aristocratic, the Third a democratic, type of society.

With regard to law and justice, the Third Estate has many more complaints than the other two. It suffered more from the abuses of the judicial system than they did. The members of the higher Courts of justice were a privileged class, mostly noble and bound by many ties to the rest of the nobility. The lower Courts of justice were mostly seigniorial and in the possession of the First and Second Estates. It is in the *cahiers* of towns and parishes that we find the most minute and acrid complaints of the way in which justice is administered. All the Estates agreed, it is true, in calling for uniform justice and in denouncing extraordinary Courts and arbitrary intervention by the executive power. Similarly we find in *cahiers* of all three Estates the demand for a humane criminal law and a better criminal procedure. Publicity of criminal trials, permission to the accused to avail himself of counsel, and the decision of guilt or innocence by a jury, are demanded in *cahiers* of all the Orders. But the *cahiers* of the Third Estate ask for much more. Very often they desire a complete recasting of the judicial system. They ask for such a rearrangement of the Courts as shall make justice readily accessible to all, limit the number of appeals, and save time and expense. They ask that the judicial office shall no longer be purchaseable or hereditary, often indeed that it shall be in some measure elective. They ask that the judges shall be irremovable. They wish the judges to be paid by salaries, not by fees. The *Parlements* are very seldom mentioned with favour, and are often denounced with a bitterness which proves how extinct was their somewhat unreal popularity. The seigniorial Courts are as a rule disliked. A *cahier* here and there dwells on the advantage of having close at hand a Court where petty disputes may be settled, and even suggests that the decision of the seigniorial judge should be made final where the value at stake is below a certain figure. But the general drift of the *cahiers* runs the other way. They allege that the judges in the feudal Courts, appointed, paid, and dismissed by the *seigneur*,

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cannot be impartial as between him and his vassals. They allege that he is often unqualified, or non-resident, or careless. They complain that the *seigneur* neglects the duty of criminal prosecution because it would cause expense, and that for the same reason the seigniorial prisons are not properly maintained. They insist, too, on the extraordinary interlacing of feudal jurisdictions and the difficulty in many cases of deciding to what feudal court the litigant should go. Upon the whole the Third Estate was ready to extirpate every trace of feudalism from the administration of justice and to reserve it entirely for the Crown and the nation.

The financial reforms demanded in the *cahiers* would alone amount to a revolution. Upon the suppression of privilege in taxation the three Estates were virtually agreed. The clergy without exception concede this point, although in some *bailliages* they wish to retain the power of assessing payments by clergymen. Only in five *bailliages* do the nobles demur to foregoing the privilege, although in a few more they ask for relief to the poorest members of the class. The Third Estate is of course unanimous on this point, sometimes grateful to the others for their public spirit, sometimes inclined to treat their surrender as a tardy atonement for prolonged injustice. The Estates are also agreed as to the chief means for protecting the State against the chronic deficits of the past. They agree in reserving the power of taxation and appropriation to the representatives of the people, in requiring the regular publication of accounts of revenue and expenditure, and in demanding the responsibility of ministers. They call for rigorous economy, especially in pensions, which had always attracted disproportionate notice; but they acknowledge that the nation is bound to make good the deficit and to satisfy the claims of the public creditor, although one or two *cahiers* suggest that the interest on the debt might be reduced without injustice. What is more serious is that most *cahiers*, especially of the Third Estate, condemn the whole fiscal system on two grounds, one speculative and the other practical. All the existing taxes have been imposed without the consent of the people, and are therefore unlawful, although the representatives of the people may continue them until a new system has been established. Almost all the existing taxes are also condemned as unwise and oppressive, in fact economically pernicious. The direct taxes, *taille*, *capitation*, and *vingtièmes*, and nearly all the indirect taxes — the *gabelle*, the *aides*, the duties on iron, leather, and various other articles — are condemned. Only two considerable sources of revenue are spared: the customs and the stamps on certain classes of documents. Even here radical changes are required, for customs duties are henceforward to be levied on the frontiers only, and the stamp duties are to be revised and lowered. In proposing new sources of revenue the authors of the *cahiers* have been influenced partly by the teaching of the Physiocrats, partly by democratic ideas, partly by the special needs

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and prejudices of the country population. Generally speaking direct taxation is preferred to indirect, not ten *cahiers* in all favouring the continuance of indirect taxes other than the customs. A direct tax is to be imposed on all the land of the kingdom; and it is sometimes suggested that this should be taken in kind. A direct tax is to be laid on property other than land and on the gains of trades and professions. Special taxes upon articles of luxury are often recommended. It is the general wish of the *cahiers* that the assessment and collection of taxes should be entrusted to the provincial and municipal assemblies. All desire to end the practice of farming the taxes. With a view to the extinction of the debt many *cahiers* advise that the domain of the Crown should be sold; a few suggest the sale of the lands of the Church. It is characteristic of the time and the people that this prodigious series of reforms is regarded as something which can be effected with little trouble or delay. Only two *cahiers*, it is said, and those drawn up by the clergy, recognise that this financial renovation will be a work of time.

When the *cahiers* touch upon the affairs of the Church, the divergence between the three Estates becomes very notable. The clergy themselves, while consenting to forgo all exemption from taxes, wish to retain their property and honorary privileges intact. They ask that the nation shall take over the debt of the clergy as having been incurred for public purposes. The changes which they recommend in the application of endowments are few and restricted. They jealously insist on maintaining the supremacy of the Catholic Church and the authority of their Order. Even when they disclaim any wish to persecute heretics who do not defy or insult the established faith, they protest against the permission of any public worship other than the Catholic, and even against the civil equality of heretics with the faithful. Often they demand that the edict of 1787 conceding the civil status to Protestants be revised. They very generally demand severe penalties against the authors and publishers of infidel books, to which they ascribe the flagrant immorality and irreligion of the time. They often desire the restoration of national and provincial councils, the strict maintenance of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and a restraint on the royal right known as the *régale*. They condemn the suppression of religious Houses, which had been going on for many years past, and desire that hereafter none be suppressed save in conformity with the Canon Law. They often ask that all colleges should be entrusted to the teaching confraternities, and that all places of education should be supervised by the Ordinary. In short they demand that in many respects the State should do more for the Church than it had done hitherto.

The tone of the nobles towards the Church is very different. They usually express a wish, it is true, that the privileges of the clergy other than exemption from taxes should be preserved; but they show no desire

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to increase the power of the Church or to lessen the freedom of the laity. The demand that the Catholic Church should remain dominant is not so often repeated as the demand for toleration. The nobles, like other laymen, evidently approved as a body the growing freedom of opinion. Some at least of the nobles would approve the suppression of religious Houses and the diversion of some ecclesiastical endowments to new purposes. When we come to the *cahiers* of the Third Estate, especially the countless *cahiers* of towns and parishes, we understand how the foundation of the power of the Church in the good-will of the laity had been shaken, and how the actual state of the Church excited the anger of many who were not conscious of rejecting her doctrines. The *cahiers* seldom contain anything relating to doctrine or worship. The desire for complete religious freedom is generally expressed in the *cahiers* of the *bailliages*, the work of a class possessing considerable culture. But alike in them and in the ruder statements of grievances drawn up by the primary assemblies, the material condition of the Church and its share in the national wealth are perpetual themes of complaint. The parochial clergy, it is true, are usually mentioned with respect, often with affection, as hardworking, pious, and benevolent men; and it is desired time after time that they should have a better livelihood. If they were properly endowed they could dispense with the *casuel* — the fees for marriages, baptisms, etc. — and the *quête* or *glane* — the periodic demand of dues from their parishioners. But it would be hard to find any cordial mention of the Bishops and Archbishops. The regular clergy are more unpopular still. They are again and again denounced as wealthy, idle, and avaricious, drawing large sums in tithe and rent from parishes where they dispense no charity, and will not even contribute to the stipend of the priest or the repair of the fabric. Some *cahiers* insist that the tithes they hold should be restored to the respective parishes and used for religion, charity, and education. Others wish to see dwindling communities more rapidly suppressed; and a few would do away with all religious Orders not engaged in active teaching or benevolence. Their estates might then be sold to pay off the public debt. Tithe, to whomsoever paid, was naturally disliked by the peasants, who ask to have it extinguished or at least reduced. A few carry thrift so far as to complain of all payments to the Court of Rome or even to suggest the institution of a French patriarch. Now and then a *cahier* anticipates the National Assembly by demanding that the State should enter upon the endowments of the Church and should pay a fixed stipend to all the clergy whose services may be thought necessary.

But it is in regard to the agrarian system that the *cahiers* of the Third Estate differ most materially from those of the clergy and the nobles, who usually demand the full recognition of their proprietary rights, including all manorial claims. The Third Estate on the contrary expresses a general desire for the extinction of feudal rights. And when

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we pass from the *cahiers* of the *bailliages* and *sénéchaussées* to the original *cahiers* of the country parishes, we find that the feudal rights are the peculiar object of the peasant's hate. In some of these *cahiers* little is said about any other grievance. Among the manorial burdens perhaps the most odious were the so-called *banalités*, the lord's exclusive right to have a mill, oven, winepress, or oilpress for the use of the tenants. The lord's right to have a dovecote was almost as great a grievance. Many of the village *cahiers* ask that if this right be retained, the pigeons may at least be shut up in seed-time and harvest, or that the peasants may be allowed to shoot them. A long list of manorial rights prevailing in different neighbourhoods, such as a right of the lord to use the peasants' cattle in drawing stones for the mill or a right of the lord to employ the peasants in clearing out the moat round his house, and others, of which the nature is sometimes obscure, are recorded and denounced in these *cahiers*. The various payments to the lord in money or in kind are of course unpopular. Usually it is proposed to commute all manorial rights having a definite money value at so many years' purchase, although in some cases the offer of compensation is omitted. Occasionally a *cahier* proposes other agrarian reforms, such as the abolition of entail or the enforcement of equal or nearly equal partition between children. But in most cases the *cahiers* of the peasants are confined to grievances which they felt directly. Among these the over-preservation of game must not be forgotten. The *cahiers* of Paris outside the walls affirm that during the last twelve years the country-folk have been forced to sow their corn and vegetables twice over, and in winter have had to guard their vines and trees against the teeth of the hares by wrapping them round with straw. The grievance was still greater when the animals thus protected were fierce and destructive.

Few burdens are so often denounced by the peasants as that of the militia service. Time after time the *cahiers* complain of the loss incurred by those who have to attend the balloting, of the subscription which, contrary to law, the young fellows who had escaped made for their comrade on whom the lot fell, and of the discredit attaching to those who served in the militia. At least one *cahier* asserts that men had been known to mutilate themselves in order to avoid service. Many *cahiers* suggest that the parishes should be allowed to hire an equivalent number of volunteers. When we think how few recruits were taken and how easy was the service required, and how patiently the French have since endured the severest conscription with far greater chances of death and disablement, we are almost forced to conclude that the rhetoric of the *cahiers* was somewhat overcharged. It is true that unjust exemptions from the ballot and other abuses might make them impatient of a burden in itself not very grievous.

Many of the other reforms demanded in the *cahiers* are of the highest significance. They anticipated Napoleon in desiring the career open to

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talent, for they ask over and over again that all citizens should be equally eligible to all preferment, civil, military, or ecclesiastical, that nobles should be enabled to practise any profession or engage in commerce without derogating, and that the gilds and all other forms of restraint on the free exercise of ability should be extinguished. They ask, often it is true in vague terms, that education should be reformed and provided at the public expense. They demand the suppression of mendicity, and an orderly system for relieving distress without encouraging idleness. They desire the reform of hospitals and prisons. They claim the emancipation of the last remaining serfs at home and the abolition of the slave trade in the colonies. These and many other fruitful ideas are to be found in *cahiers*, not only of the Third Estate, but also of the nobles and clergy. For the spirit of improvement was widely diffused, and the love of mankind which was on the lips of all was in the hearts of many.

He must be wanting in human sympathy who feels no response in his own soul to this generous ardour of a great people, this zeal to redress inveterate injustice and set order in place of confusion. The wide sweep of the French Revolution was the secret of its charm for mankind as well as a cause of its partial failure. The French undoubtedly attempted far too much, and with means the most imperfect; for a working parliamentary system is the slow result of time and labour. Practice, discipline, party organisation, the feeling of responsibility raised in those who censure by the knowledge that they may presently have to govern, the control exerted by a public accustomed to hear all sides and to learn from all — these are barely enough to secure judgment and forethought in a parliament working under normal conditions. In 1789 a new assembly of untrained men was set between a weak, discredited, bankrupt government and a people rapidly passing beyond control, and in the midst of anarchy essayed not merely to govern but to create a government, nay more, to reconstruct a society which had lasted many centuries and numbered many millions of citizens. The enterprise was so much beyond human power that we cannot wonder if the National Assembly succeeded in destroying far more than it could rebuild.

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CHAPTER VI

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, AND THE SPREAD OF ANARCHY

THE place of meeting for the States General had been discussed in the Royal Council. With a foreboding of the danger which might ensue if they met in Paris, Barentin, the Keeper of the Seals, had suggested Soissons or some other provincial town conveniently situated. Necker demurred to the expense of removing the Court in the actual distress of the Treasury. He would have preferred Paris as the place of assembly, because in Paris the fund-holders were most numerous and had most power over public opinion — a weighty recommendation in the eyes of a financier who desired the convocation of the States General chiefly as a means of restoring the national credit. But the majority of the councillors wished the States General to meet at Versailles, where the King, Court, and Ministers were already established, thus saving time and trouble and causing no break in the comfortable tenor of their own lives. The King decided in favour of Versailles, and the palace of Louis XIV became the birthplace of modern democracy, as it afterwards became that of the German Empire.

As to the graver question, what should be done with the States General when they met, the King and his Ministers were still without a policy and lost in the forms and traditions of the past. They had not even determined how far they would go in resisting the fusion of the three Estates. The officers of the Court had considered the etiquette suitable to a session of the States General, and, guided only by precedent, had chosen all the forms most apt to emphasise the distinction between the Orders, and therefore to incense those whom it was so important to conciliate. Men of the middle class are naturally disposed to prize the condescension of a sovereign, and Frenchmen have always been sensitive on points of ceremony. Prudence therefore enjoined extreme courtesy towards the Third Estate and the quiet suppression of such antiquated usages as might wound their new sense of power and dignity. The contrary course was taken; and the deputies of the Third Estate were made to feel that they were deemed inferior to the clergy and the nobles.

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These deputies, already convinced that the fusion of the Orders was the only means of securing the vast reforms which they desired, were not cowed but exasperated by treatment so injudicious. They immediately engaged in a conflict with the nobles and the superior clergy, who took their stand upon tradition, and, encouraged by the demeanour of the King and his Ministers, sought to preserve for themselves a separate existence and equal power. The King, at length interposing, did far too little to decide the issue, but far too much for his own popularity. It was not until many weeks of precious time had been lost, until party feeling had been fearfully embittered, until the Crown had lost the little influence it still retained, and France had passed the verge of dissolution, that the Third Estate carried its point and turned the ancient States General into a modern Constituent Assembly.

On Monday, May 4, 1789, took place the religious ceremony which preceded the opening of the session. The deputies of the Three Estates met at the church of Notre Dame and marched in procession to the church of St Louis, where mass was celebrated and the Bishop of Nancy preached a sermon. Although the deputies assembled at seven, the King did not appear until ten o'clock. Agreeably to ancient usage, the members of the Third Estate were plainly attired in black, a mortifying contrast with the splendid garb of the nobles and prelates. The clergy of Versailles led the way, then came the Third Estate, then the nobles, and after them the clerical deputies, and last of all the King and Queen, surrounded by the Princes and Princesses of the Blood Royal. An immense multitude thronged the streets, the balconies, and the roofs of Versailles. It received the Third Estate with loud applause, the nobles and clergy with indifference. It gave a cordial welcome to the King, but to him alone, for the Princes passed without notice, and the Queen was deeply wounded by the too apparent disfavour of the public. The Bishop's sermon reflected the inconsistent feelings of many among his audience. While he exhausted his art in describing the misery of the people, especially the intolerable burden of the taxes, he was careful to remind the Third Estate that they must not expect too much, and that the surrender of privilege must always be a matter of grace, not of compulsion. But the deputies, who were not yet in an irritable frame of mind, listened with facile enthusiasm. Indeed the men of our colder age can ill comprehend the ecstasy which was then all but universal. "Tears of joy flowed from my eyes. My God, my country, my fellow-citizens had become myself." Such were the emotions of the plain, sensible Ferrières, a Marquis and a conservative.

On the following day the King opened the session of the States General. The authorities of the palace, inexperienced in the needs of a parliament, had not been judicious in their preparations. For the place of assembly they had chosen the *Salle des Menus Plaisirs*, merely because it was an enormous room and could be spared. It had been

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hastily fitted up; and no provision was made to separate the deputies from mere spectators. Although the deputies had been summoned for eight o'clock, the ceremony did not begin till ten; and, while the nobles and clergy passed freely through the great door, the men of the Third Estate were kept waiting in a narrow corridor until the roll of the *bailliages* had been called. When at length all the deputies had taken their places, the King entered, and in a few words declared the session open. At his command, the Keeper of the Seals then delivered a long oration, in which he dwelt upon a number of reforms proper to employ the attention of the Estates. But the most significant passage was a declaration that the King left the Orders free to determine whether they should sit and vote jointly or separately. When the Keeper of the Seals had ended, Necker began to read his report on the state of the finances; but it was so long that he found his voice fail and handed it to a secretary. The report was neither candid nor politic. It was not candid, because Necker in his eagerness to show how much had already been done to restore the finances, put the deficit at 56,000,000 *livres*, little more than a third of the figures given by Brienne the year before. He did this by ignoring certain expenses styled extraordinary and certain reimbursements of loans contracted by the State, although both were matters of obligation. Nor was the report politic, because Necker, instead of suggesting large reforms, proposed to cover the deficit by a number of expedients, some of them judicious, but all too petty to impress a popular assembly. Like the Keeper of the Seals, he invited the deputies to consider a long list of subjects, and dwelt on the momentous character of their labours, yet spoke of joint deliberation by the three Orders as a procedure which might be useful in some cases, but must in all cases be voluntary. He was applauded as a matter of course; but, when the ceremony was over and the deputies of the Third Estate had time to reflect, they could not but be disappointed; and from this day, although at first by slow degrees, Necker's popularity began to abate.

It should be noted that on this memorable occasion the Ministers, while inviting the deputies to an immense range of discussion, did not lay before them any definite proposals on behalf of the Crown. No bills were brought into the States General by the King's advisers. No attempt was made to utilise for the States General the skill and experience of the public offices. No provision was made for guiding debate into useful channels. The Crown neglected to take that initiative which is of such invaluable consequence in legislation, and left the dearest interests of France at the mercy of a raw, unpractised assembly of twelve hundred men, who were not agreed even upon the primary matter of their own constitution. Yet we should err if we ascribed this procedure, in English eyes so unreasonable, to perversity or to a deep-laid scheme for rendering the States General futile and ridiculous. It originated in nothing worse

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than blind adherence to the traditions of a remote age. As we have seen, the States General had never been a legislature in the true sense, nor had the King's Ministers ever sat in the States General. To petition for the redress of grievances had been the function of the States General; to grant or to withhold redress had been the prerogative of the Crown. When, therefore, the States General were revived after long disuse, it seemed enough that the King through his Ministers should encourage them to ask for reforms and promise his most serious consideration of all their requests. To guide the debates seemed needless; to influence them seemed improper. When certain Breton deputies, more alive to the spirit of the time, assured Bertrand de Molleville of their anxiety to support the Crown and asked for guidance, he consulted Necker, who declined on principle all private communication with members of the States General. As during the elections, so in the first days of the session, the government remained passive and left to chance that direction which it refused to assume. It was soon to learn the consequences of reviving obsolete institutions in a society where everything had become new.

Before the deputies could act, it was necessary that their powers should be verified: in other words, that each should satisfy his colleagues of his right to the character which he claimed. The conflict between the Estates therefore took the form of a dispute as to whether the verification of powers should be joint or separate. On the morning of May 6 the deputies of the Third Estate found themselves alone in the *Salle des Menus Plaisirs*, the nobles and the clergy having assembled in their respective Chambers. The clergy resolved upon separate verification of powers, but only by 133 voices to 114, a few of the prelates and a great number of the *curés* voting in the minority. The nobles resolved upon the same course by the decisive majority of 188 to 47, and promptly began the work of verification. As the men of the Third Estate were determined to enforce joint verification, they were in a singular position. For they could not act, they could not even debate without organising themselves in some degree; and they were afraid lest in giving themselves an organisation they should seem to accept the position of a separate Chamber. They were, moreover, a mere crowd of persons unknown to one another, and with less Parliamentary experience than most English schoolboys. Under these difficulties they behaved with constancy and astuteness. They agreed to name the senior deputy present their *doyen*, and began an informal debate on the question of the hour. Then and afterwards they had an advantage in occupying the hall which had been dedicated to the use of the collective States General, and which was spacious enough to admit the public; while the First and Second Estates, sitting elsewhere and in private, seemed mere fragments of the national representation.

Parties and leaders could not exist in an assembly altogether new, but men soon learn to measure themselves and others in debate, and in

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a few days certain members took an acknowledged ascendancy over their fellows. Among these was Mounier, perhaps the best known politician in France, esteemed an oracle upon all questions of Parliamentary procedure, and Sieyès, whose pamphlets had signalised him as the champion of the Third Estate. Among those of a conservative temper Malouet speedily gained a distinction due even more to his character than to his abilities. But these men were presently overshadowed by one who had no recommendations save genius and courage, whose reputation was not far removed from infamy, and who, though it was impossible to despise and difficult to hate him, was deeply distrusted by almost all his colleagues. Honoré-Gabriel Riqueti, Comte de Mirabeau, the scion of an ancient Provençal house, was now in his forty-first year. His father, the Marquis de Mirabeau, a man of rare though perverse talent, and of the strangest, most gnarled character, half feudal lord, half modern philanthropist, was a voluminous writer upon political and economical subjects, a worshipper of Quesnay, a fanatic among the Physiocrats. From early years young Mirabeau gave proof of an overflowing energy, a boundless versatility, a unique power of fascinating men and women, but also of a most irregular and ungovernable temperament. He was incessantly at war with his father, who procured several *lettres de cachet* for his confinement. He made an unwise and unhappy marriage which resulted, after ten years of scandal, in a judicial decree of separation. By the abduction of Madame Monnier he brought upon himself a capital sentence, never meant to be executed, and a rigorous imprisonment of more than three years in the castle of Vincennes. When he regained his freedom, it was only to break finally with both wife and father. He escaped to a wandering life in England, Prussia, and elsewhere, earned his bread now as a hack writer and now as a secret agent of the French Foreign Office, and came to be recognised by ministers as a useful if not very trustworthy instrument. Seldom has any man destined to greatness led a life not only so immoral but so ignoble as Mirabeau led until he had reached middle age. That he pursued his amours without shame or scruple might admit of palliation in so dissolute a society. But he was lacking in every form of delicacy. Careless of truth, abounding in profusion, unmeasured in his language of enmity or friendship, and too often stooping to dishonourable tricks, such as the unauthorised publication of his correspondence from Berlin when serving the French government, he almost deserved the bitter gibes and reproaches with which his father coupled every mention of his name. And yet Mirabeau had a warm, expansive nature, capable of high ambitions and sensitive to great ideas. Austerely moral men such as Malouet and Romilly were convinced of his disposition to goodness; and, indeed, without some genuine worth he could not have won so many devoted friends.

In the depths of poverty and shame Mirabeau was sustained by a patrician arrogance which sorted oddly with his later character of tribune,

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by a most sanguine spirit, and above all by the consciousness of extraordinary powers. From the time when the King promised to convoke the States General he felt the assurance of an illustrious career. When Provence recovered its Estates, he offered himself as the champion of the popular party against his own order. In retaliation the nobles denied his claim to a seat among them, on the ground that he was not possessor of a fief, the qualification required by usage in Provence. Their enmity only endeared him the more to the common people. At the time of the elections for the States General he quelled by mere personal influence two formidable outbreaks in Aix and in Marseilles respectively, and was elected by both cities a deputy for the Third Estate. He preferred to sit for Aix, and returned to Paris already a conspicuous public man.

Mirabeau's true bent was to action. Although he always read greedily, especially when a prisoner, it was without method and without making himself master of any subject. Although he was a facile writer, turning out translations, histories, essays, pamphlets, and economic dissertations in endless succession, none of his works has any lasting value beyond the light which it sheds on the author. He possessed an extraordinary art of using other men's minds and appropriating the fruits of their labour. It is impossible to say how much of his books was written by himself. Thus the main drudgery of his famous work *On the Prussian Monarchy under Frederick II* was done by a certain Major Mauvillon, and Mirabeau only set the impress of his thought and style upon the material. In his brief political career he had many assistants, such as Dumont, Duroveray, Clavière, and Reybaz, who fed his untiring activity with information, with drafts of laws and pamphlets, and even with notes of speeches. Aulard thinks that we cannot positively ascribe to Mirabeau any of the orations which he read in the *tribune;* only the improvisations being certainly and entirely his own. Yet none can say that Mirabeau owed power or fame to plagiarism. Nobody has ventured to dispute his genius as an orator. He was a true rhetorician, rhetorical even in his familiar letters, with the full-flowing, vehement rhetoric of the South; but, in spite of all his fire and facility, he was not a debater, for he poured himself forth in a single effort and did not excel in reply. His biographer, Loménie, endorses Macaulay's epithet of a Wilkes-Chatham as descriptive of Mirabeau's peculiar eloquence. A large and powerful frame, a species of heroic ugliness, mobile and expressive features, and a thick mane of dark hair, made up a presence which held and overawed his hearers; and he had the true orator's voice.

If Mirabeau was original as an orator, he was still more original as a statesman. His natural insight had been sharpened in a life of struggle and adventure. He neither had the small, systematic mind of the country *curé* or lawyer, nor shared the illusions of the courtiers and prelates who basked in the splendour of Versailles. The fuller knowledge which we now possess clears him from the old reproach of apostasy, and enables

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us to see that his political tendencies remained the same throughout. From the first he perceived that the Revolution was irresistible, and would be far-reaching. He saw that the ancient form of society, and above all the privileged orders, were doomed to disappear. At the same time he honestly desired a real government. "Do not multiply vain declamations; revive the executive power." In this spirit he desired to preserve the monarchy, and restore to it as much strength as would be compatible with the Parliamentary system. He looked down upon his colleagues with a disdain, partly of birth, partly of conscious power; and he foretold that they would not stop until they had plunged France into chaos. As early as May, 1789, he had offered the Crown his services to guide and control the Revolution. But his inward tendency was obscured by many outward circumstances. A poor, discredited adventurer, he felt that he must play the demagogue in order to reach the position which he knew himself able to fill. Though proud of his rank, he knew himself despised and rejected by his brother nobles; and his scorn for their incapacity was embittered by resentment. His endeavours towards an understanding with the King and the Ministers were all in vain; they knew his vices, they could not understand his powers, and they saw in him little more than an agitator trying to raise his price. It must be acknowledged too that, with all his energy of character, Mirabeau was unstable. His angry father once declared that for a soul he had only a mirror where everything painted itself and disappeared in an instant. We must not expect to find in Mirabeau's career that high consistency to which statesmen of firmer and purer nature and less severely tried have sometimes risen.

His first act as a deputy was to publish a journal entitled *Journal des États généraux* with the significant motto "*Novus rerum nascitur ordo*." In the first number, published on May 5, he had complained of the irritating etiquette imposed on the Third Estate, and had criticised the sermon of the Bishop of Nancy. In the second he made a fierce onslaught upon Necker's address to the States General. As he had asked no permission to set up his journal, and Ministers were not wont to be thus roughly handled, there forthwith appeared a decree of the Council suppressing it, and another announcing that the actual press regulations would be enforced until the Estates had considered the subject and the King had determined what changes were desirable. Mirabeau replied by bringing out a new journal, *Lettres du Comte de Mirabeau à ses commettants*, thus sheltering himself behind his character of deputy, and began with a fiery denunciation of ministerial despotism. The ever-retreating government then announced that journals and periodicals might publish all that passed in the States General, but must abstain from comment. This proviso was ignored from the first by Mirabeau, and soon by everybody.

Even in the first day's discussion some hasty spirits among the Third

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Estate proposed that they should constitute themselves a National Assembly and proceed to business forthwith. Malouet proposed that they should send deputations to argue with the clergy and the nobles; but Mounier objected that by taking this course they would seem to acknowledge themselves a separate Chamber. On the second day Mirabeau, for the first time addressing his colleagues, urged that they should remain passive, but Mounier, changing his mind, supported Malouet and advised negotiations with the nobles and the clergy. The nobles had adjourned until May 11, but the clergy returned an encouraging answer and announced that they would choose representatives to discuss the subject of verification with the other Estates. The nobles when they reassembled declared themselves a separate Chamber, but accepted the proposed conference. The Third Estate was divided on this point. Le Chapelier, a deputy from Rennes, with Breton vehemence proposed to cut short the controversy by declaring that they would recognise as lawful representatives only those persons whose powers had been verified in a joint assembly. But, after a debate which lasted until May 18, commissioners were nominated to confer with the commissioners of the nobles.

The conferences took place on May 23 and 25, in presence of the representatives of the clergy acting as friendly neutrals. The nobles alleged history and precedent in favour of the separation of the Orders. The commissioners of the Third Estate replied that history and precedent could be quoted for either course, but that reason and justice were in favour of the Orders acting jointly. Neither party was convinced, and the conferences ended without result. The Third Estate, who had meanwhile been considering their own organisation and procedure, now resolved to try an appeal to the clergy. On May 27 they solemnly invited the clergy to a joint verification of powers, and many of the inferior clergy were visibly disposed to join them at once; but the leaders had enough influence to prevent immediate action, and the favourable impulse cooled. At the desire, doubtless, of those who wished to gain time, the King now interposed to enjoin a renewal of the conferences in the presence of the Keeper of the Seals and commissioners specially appointed. The clergy assented at once; the nobles and the Third Estate were for opposite reasons more reluctant; but Mirabeau, faithful to the principle of deference for the Crown, persuaded his colleagues to acquiesce, and at the same time to appoint a deputation which might lay before the King the reasons for their conduct. The conferences were thus renewed and lasted from June 1 to 9; but, none of the middle ways proposed finding favour with both parties, no result ensued beyond loss of time and further exasperation. Meantime the King had treated the Third Estate with singular want of tact. The illness of his eldest son, which presently proved fatal, was a valid reason for delay in receiving their deputation; but the reluctance to cast aside forms of etiquette which

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were considered humiliating was at such a crisis puerile. It was not until June 6 that the deputation was admitted to the royal presence.

The conferences having failed, Sieyès, encouraged by Mirabeau, moved on June 10 that the Third Estate should for the last time invite the clergy and nobles to a joint verification of powers, announcing at the same time that they would proceed to verify forthwith. The proposal was carried by an overwhelming majority; and it was agreed to send a second deputation to the King to state the reasons for this decisive step. As neither the nobles nor the clergy responded to the summons, the Third Estate took action on June 12. Bailly, who chanced to be then acting as *doyen*, was named provisional President; the roll of the *bailliages* was called; and the work of verification began. All through that day the deputies were left to themselves; but on the next they were joined by three *curés* from Poitou, and on June 14 six other clergymen followed the example. On that day the verification of powers was completed; and the Third Estate, now regarding themselves as an actual parliament, had to consider what title they should assume.

The new debate thus begun lasted three days. It was difficult indeed to find an appellation which should express all that the Third Estate and their few adherents claimed to be, and yet not wholly ignore the rights of the other Orders who might possibly come to terms. Various titles, sometimes verging upon the grotesque, were proposed. Sieyès moved that the house should style itself "The Assembly of the known and verified representatives of the French nation." Barère, objecting to this style on the ground that it assumed too much, offered as an alternative, "legitimate representatives of the majority of Frenchmen." Mounier, studying accuracy more than effect, gravely suggested that they should call themselves, "The Lawful Assembly of the Representatives of the majority of Frenchmen acting in the absence of the minority." Always anxious not to push matters to a breach with the King, Mirabeau advised that the House should entitle itself, "The Assembly of the Representatives of the People." But the deputies did not relish the appellation of representatives of the people, because "people" might be taken as the equivalent of "populace." In vain Mirabeau urged that the friends of freedom had often assumed names far less honourable, even names devised by the malice of their enemies, and had turned these into badges of glory. Far from having any effect upon jealous and distrustful colleagues, his arguments called forth a storm of abuse and contradiction which even Mirabeau could not encounter. In the midst of this hubbub Legrand, a deputy from Berry, proposed that they should denominate themselves "The National Assembly." The term had already been applied to the States General in various pamphlets and *cahiers* and even by the King himself. It did full justice to the pretensions of the deputies; it was short, dignified, and popular, and, in a word, had so many advantages that Sieyès, catching the sense of his hearers, withdrew his original motion and

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adopted the term proposed by Legrand. On the morning of June 17, after a long and fierce debate, the amended motion of Sieyès was carried by 491 voices to 90, although Malouet asserts that the minority would have been far larger but for intimidation.

The die was now cast, and the Revolution had begun. Whatever differences of opinion might be possible regarding the constitution of the ancient States General, it was certain that a single Estate, in assuming the character of a national assembly, did something altogether new and altogether exceeding its legal powers. Although it allowed the deputies of the clergy and nobles to enter as individuals, it denied a separate existence to those Estates which in law were its equals. In taking its new title, it shook off all the restraints which tradition had imposed on the action of any one Estate, or of all the Estates together. By doing this without the sanction of the Crown, the supreme legislator for centuries, it advanced a claim to recast the constitution of the kingdom. The spokesmen of the Third Estate could defend their policy only by an appeal to abstract reason and justice, in other words by denying validity to the actual institutions of France. Their favourite argument that the representatives of twenty-four millions of men should prevail over the representatives of two hundred thousand implied, indeed, that no government other than extreme democracy can ever be legitimate, and involved consequences which most of them would hardly have cared to acknowledge. Yet it must be admitted that there were very cogent reasons for this momentous decision of the Third Estate. The historic constitution of the States General was obsolete, and the attempt to revive it was a grave error. Such were the hindrances to reform that a revolution of some kind was perhaps unavoidable. But it was natural that Mirabeau, in his desire to abridge that revolution and to save the authority of the Crown, should have preferred a more modest title. Many months afterwards he said to Dumont, "Ah! my friend, how right we were in our unwillingness that the Third Estate should term itself 'The National Assembly'!"

The Assembly showed itself aware of the true nature of its action by the measures which it now took against a possible attack from the Crown. These measures had been indicated by Mirabeau on June 15, but they were actually drafted and proposed by Target and Le Chapelier. It was decreed that all the existing taxes, although unlawful, not having been sanctioned by the people, should continue to be paid as formerly until the day on which the National Assembly should first separate, after which all taxes not expressly authorised by the nation should cease and determine. The Assembly further declared that, immediately after fixing the principles of the constitution, it would proceed to examine and consolidate the public debt, and that it placed the public creditor under the guarantee of the honour and loyalty of the French nation. It also promised an enquiry at the earliest possible date into the causes and remedies of the

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scarcity. The first of these resolutions made it hopeless in the actual state of France for the Crown to levy any taxes unless it remained on good terms with the Assembly. The second enlisted all the fund-holders in the popular cause; and the third appealed to all who were hungry, or who feared to be so. It is true that the assertion of the unlawfulness of the actual taxes made the taxpayers more bold than ever to delay or refuse payment. The revenue became more and more difficult to collect; and the deficit, quite curable at the opening of the States General, became enormous. But the Assembly distrusted the King too much to regret this disorder, and soon found in the confiscation of the Church lands a resource which it fondly thought inexhaustible. Its resolutions were admirably adapted to their immediate purpose, and its skill and vigour contrasted with the slow and feeble measures of its antagonists.

The effect upon the divided and wavering clergy was soon apparent. On June 19 they decided by 128 voices to 127 in favour of the joint verification of powers. The nobles, more united in defence of their privilege, still held firm and voted an address to the King condemning the usurpations of the Third Estate. The King, though displeased, had remained inactive. It was not until the evening of the 17th, when the great debate was over, that his reply to the address voted by the Third Estate on the 10th had come into the hands of Bailly. It contained little more than a censure of the term "privileged Orders" as applied to the clergy and nobles, and a reproof to the Third Estate for failing in deference to their sovereign. Their adoption of the title of "National Assembly" and their subsequent resolutions could not but alarm Louis. He resolved to hold a "royal session" and to command the Estates to lose no further time in controversy. For this purpose preparations in the *Salle des Menus Plaisirs* were needful, and the sittings of the Assembly would have to be interrupted. But, instead of giving formal notice to Bailly as President, the Ministers with discourteous folly sent the workmen into the hall on June 20 and caused placards to be posted, announcing the 22nd as the day of the royal session. Only at the last moment did de Brézé, Grand Master of the Ceremonies, inform Bailly by letter that he was about to proclaim the royal session by the voice of heralds. Bailly took no heed, but went with the deputies to their accustomed hall; and, finding the doors shut, adjourned with them to a neighbouring tennis-court. There the deputies, incensed at the discourtesy with which they had been treated and suspecting a resolution on the part of the government to interrupt their sittings, or even to dissolve their assembly, acclaimed Mounier's proposal that they should take a solemn oath not to separate until the constitution had been established. Only a single deputy, a certain Martin of Auch, refused to swear; and the Oath of the Tennis-Court became one of the most memorable incidents of the French Revolution.

No notice was taken of the oath and no attempt was made to check

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the debates of the Assembly, which presently removed its sittings to the church of St Louis. Here, on June 22, the bulk of the clergy, headed by the Archbishops of Vienne and Bordeaux and the Bishops of Rodez, Chartres, and Coutances, came to take their seats beside the commons. Even the nobles were now shaken, and on the same day the Marquis de Blaçons and the Comte d'Agoult joined the National Assembly. Meantime the royal session had been postponed to the 23rd, for the King was as usual irresolute, and his advisers were at variance regarding the tenor of his declarations to the Estates. Necker and his liberal colleagues wished the King to accept with some reserves the principle of joint deliberation, and to announce an ample programme of reform. The conservatives, led by Barentin, altogether rejected joint deliberation and would have had the King promise as few reforms as possible. Necker had the worst in the debate; and the royal declaration, which he had drafted, was modified in Barentin's sense. Necker did not resign, but, after some hesitation, resolved not to appear at the royal session, thus saving his credit with the people, though rendering himself odious to the King and Queen.

On the morning of the 23rd the deputies reassembled in the *Salle des Menus Plaisirs*, but not until the Third Estate had suffered a new affront in being forced to wait for some time after the clergy and nobles had taken their seats. The streets of Versailles were lined with troops, and the crowd for the first time received Louis in gloomy silence. After the King had explained the reasons for his interference, a Secretary of State read the royal declaration "with respect to the holding of the present States General." It made known the King's will that the distinction between the three Estates should be observed as an essential part of the Constitution, although they might by mutual consent and with his approval deliberate together when convenient. It annulled the resolutions taken by the Third Estate on June 17, and all directions given by electors to their deputies with regard to joint deliberation and vote by head. From the subjects which might be jointly considered by the three Estates it excluded the form to be given to the next States General, as well as the feudal property and the privileges of the clergy and nobility. The separate consent of the clergy it declared indispensable to every decision affecting the Church. Another Secretary of State then read "a declaration of the King's intentions," setting forth the reforms which he promised to his people. No new tax was to be imposed, no loan contracted, without the consent of the States General; the accounts of revenue and expenditure were to be published; and the sums appropriated to each department to be fixed beyond possibility of variation. Immunities from taxation were to cease, and the most unpopular taxes to be abolished or amended. Personal servitude was to be suppressed. Provincial Estates were to be established throughout the kingdom. The States General were invited to consider the

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suppression of *lettres de cachet*, the grant of a certain liberty to the press, the reform of the law, and the mitigation of the militia service. But the King expressly reserved to himself entire authority over the army.

When the second declaration had been read the King spoke for the last time, announcing that, if he were abandoned by the States General in the beneficent work of reform, "alone he would ensure the happiness of his people," and enjoining the Orders to repair the next day each to its separate Chamber. The King and his train then retired, and the bulk of the nobles and some of the clergy withdrew; but the rest of the deputies remained motionless in their seats. The Grand Master of the Ceremonies thereupon came forward and said, "Gentlemen, you know the intentions of the King." Mirabeau (whose words have been variously reported) answered for the Assembly and said, "If you have been charged to make us quit this place, you must ask for orders to use force, for we will not stir from our places save at the point of the bayonet." As de Brézé declined to take an answer from a private deputy, Bailly, the President, replied that he had no power to break up the Assembly until it had deliberated upon the royal session just over.

Thus ended the royal session of June 23, memorable as the most striking display of the King's weakness. At the advice both of Necker and of Necker's enemies, Louis had at length abandoned his merely passive part and had come forward to declare both the Constitution and the business of the States General. So far he had only done what it might have been prudent to do earlier. But he acted too late and under the influence of those whom the Assembly could not fail to distrust. Moreover the reservations which accompanied the King's promises were serious. His concessions did not expressly include periodic States General, or the recognition of legislative power in the States General, or the responsibility of ministers. Louis took his stand upon his ancient and undoubted prerogative; the National Assembly took theirs upon the abstract sovereignty of the people. Where principles were so sharply opposed, extraordinary wisdom and temper would have been required to effect a compromise. Moreover the King did not enact any reform, he merely declared his intentions; and experience had shown that, if the intentions of Louis were generally good, they were often ineffective. A year earlier his declaration would have been applauded; it now provoked murmurs; and the Assembly held on its course as if he had not spoken.

We may wonder more that Louis should have suffered his wishes so solemnly announced to be treated with contempt. Some of his advisers may have thought of using force; but, when de Brézé informed the King of the contumacy of the deputies, he replied that, if the gentlemen of the Third Estate did not choose to quit the hall, there was nothing to do but to leave them there. No further interference was attempted. The roll of the Assembly was called, and every

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member of the Third Estate answered to his name. The clergymen whose powers had been verified claimed to sit and vote; and those who had not yet undergone that formality asked that their names might be entered on the journals as present. The debate on the royal session then began; and, after one or two members had spoken, Sieyès rose and said in his dry, incisive manner, "Gentlemen, you are to-day that which you were yesterday." The applause was loud and general; and the resolution of Camus that the Assembly persisted in its former decrees was adopted without a division. Mirabeau then proposed that the Assembly should declare the persons of its members inviolable. This motion was carried by 493 voices to 34, and the House adjourned to the following day.

Meantime the commotion was great in Paris and Versailles. In Versailles crowds continued to grow and to display a menacing temper. On a report that Necker had resigned, his house was beset with anxious citizens, begging that he would resume office. In Paris men of business were panic-struck, and rushed to the *Caisse d'Escompte* to get gold for their paper. They even prepared a deputation to remonstrate with the King. The clubs in the Palais-Royal held more violent language than ever, and the seditious talked of a march on Versailles. Necker had in fact resigned after the royal session; but the King and Queen were forced to entreat that he would come back, and he consented. He returned home from the palace through a rejoicing multitude. According to his own account, generosity forbade him to ask for the dismissal of his opponents; but, according to Barentin, he asked for it in vain. The King's humiliation confirmed his dislike of Necker, and he readily accepted Necker's promise to retire at the first intimation and in such a way as to attract the least notice possible. Within three weeks Necker learnt how precarious was his tenure.

Now that the impotence of the Crown was beyond dispute, events marched rapidly towards the total union of the Three Estates. On June 24 the Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre had moved the nobles, though in vain, that they should join the commons. The next day he and his supporters to the number of forty-seven, with the Duke of Orleans at their head, passed over to the National Assembly. Presently other noblemen followed their example. The clergy continued to come in. The Archbishop of Paris, the most obstinate opponent of union, was set upon by a band of ruffians when leaving the chamber of the clergy, and would perhaps have been murdered had he not consented to do likewise. Although he had promised under duress, he felt bound by his word and went. The irresolute King accepted defeat, and at Necker's prompting wrote to the Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld, President of the clergy, and the Duc de Luxembourg, President of the nobles, inviting both Orders to join the National Assembly. As the Cardinal and the Duke hesitated, Louis summoned them to his presence and by personal solicitation

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extorted their consent. The clergy now professed themselves willing to obey the King if the nobles would do the like. But among the nobles many, with Cazalès and d'Espréménil at their head, remained obdurate until the King had invoked the help of his brother, the Comte d'Artois, the chief of the high aristocratic party. A letter from the Count, alleging that the King's life was in danger, silenced opposition; and all the remaining nobles and clergymen took their seats in the Assembly. Yet a few days later the Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld made a declaration reserving the right of the clergy in future sessions to sit and vote separately. So late as July 3 eighty-nine nobles signed a declaration in favour of upholding the distinction between the Orders. Other symptoms, trivial in themselves, showed that many of the nobles and the clergy regretted the surrender which they had made at the instance of the sovereign, and would take the first opportunity of recovering their independence.

By July 2 the powers of all the deputies had been duly verified and the National Assembly was at length complete. On the following day Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, made a motion that all imperative instructions given by the electors to their representatives should be cancelled; and, after a long debate, the substance of his motion was adopted. The royal declaration had set a precedent for this vote which effaced yet another peculiarity of the old States General and vested in the National Assembly the plenitude of sovereign power. The Assembly was at length free to begin "the regeneration of France." On July 6 it appointed the first Committee of the Constitution. But unforeseen events occasioned a brief crisis, and gave the Revolution a more violent character. Louis must have regarded the course of the Assembly with as much indignation as was possible to his sluggish nature. The Assembly had scornfully ignored what he must have deemed his lawful and justifiable intervention; and it had forced upon him the indignity of having to exact that very union of the Orders which he disapproved. Yet left to himself Louis might have accepted this rebuff and continued to drift on the stream of chance. But those who had prompted his action and saw more clearly every day the scope of the Revolution that was impending, were not inclined to yield so easily. They determined to get rid of Necker and of the Ministers who followed him, and probably to put an end to the National Assembly. As the dismissal of Necker might lead to an insurrection, a large force of troops, especially of the foreign regiments in French pay, was directed upon Paris and Versailles under the command of Marshal de Broglie, a trusty veteran of the Seven Years' War. The recent outbreaks of disorder in and near the capital afforded a pretext for this concentration, but the Assembly at once divined its real purpose. The deputies of the Third Estate, who were in constant correspondence with their electors, spread the alarm and set on foot an agitation throughout the kingdom.

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But the centre of resistance was the capital; and from this time forward Paris becomes the focus of the Revolution.

For many months past the fabric of French society had been falling into ruin. The bold and successful resistance of the *Parlements* to Brienne had made manifest the irresolution and weakness of the sovereign and his ministers. The bad harvest of 1788 and the severe winter which followed had brought many thousands to the verge of starvation and filled the land with vagabonds and beggars. The elections for the States General had made political discussion universal, had given even the most ignorant a vivid notion of the wrongs which they endured, and had possessed the minds of all who were wretched with the thought of change and the hope of a great deliverance. Although the electoral assemblies were as a rule orderly and decorous, the period of the elections had been marked by many acts of riot and outrage. Taine has reckoned upwards of three hundred outbreaks of disorder between March and July of 1789. Most of these might be described as bread or corn riots. The populace rose to prevent grain being carried out of their district, or to seize the corn stored in magazines or religious Houses, or to force the bakers to sell at less than the market price, or to seize the bread without paying any price at all. All such acts of violence tended to make corn scarcer and bread dearer, and so to multiply themselves. Sometimes the rioters wreaked their grudge on the feudal system by sacking country-houses or burning manorial records. Sometimes they ventured on more direct rebellion, destroying the town barriers and refusing to pay the *octroi* or even the King's taxes. Almost all these acts of lawlessness went unpunished. For the police, both in town and country, was weak; the soldiers were becoming disaffected, and the officers, as well as the magistrates and Intendants, swayed either by fear or by philanthropic sentiment, were most unwilling to take severe measures. Their forbearance was construed as weakness, and the law continued to be broken as before. The condition of France in the summer of 1789 is best described by Taine's phrase of "spontaneous anarchy."

No less alarming was the state of Paris. Then, even more than now, Paris was the centre of French political life, the source of French political ideas. The victory of the *Parlements* over the Crown had nowhere been more complete than in Paris. Idle and starving people had been drawn to the capital in the hope of sharing in its profuse charity. The relief works set on foot by the municipal authority had attracted thousands who did nothing useful, yet could not be turned away without extreme danger of an insurrection. Among the upper class the fund-holders, as we have seen, despairing of the solvency of the government, put all their hope in a political revolution. Men of all conditions were in such a ferment as had never been known before. For to that age of inexperience political life had the wonder and the charm of a newly

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discovered continent. There everything seemed possible to eager and restless minds. Every enthusiast might hope that the public would take his prescription for freedom and happiness. Every adventurer might feel assured that a boundless career awaited his ability and daring. Political discussion was therefore general and unceasing. As yet newspapers were only beginning to appear, and Camille Desmoulins, the cleverest journalist of the Revolution, was still in quest of a publisher. But pamphlets still poured from the press, and speakers could everywhere find a forum. In many of the districts formed for the elections of the Third Estate the citizens had continued to meet and to discuss the questions of the hour. Out of one of these assemblies grew the famous club of the Cordeliers, where Danton made his first essays as a public speaker and gained his first adherents. Beside the district assemblies there sprang up a multitude of clubs, mostly small and shortlived, but in their day full of zealous disputants. For the labouring classes there were the popular societies which met in the tavern or in the open street. In such obscure and irresponsible gatherings doctrines were often upheld and methods were often suggested which no deputy would have ventured to name at Versailles. Republicans on principle like Desmoulins were still few; but many were prepared for any violence against the enemies of the Third Estate.

The Duke of Orleans had already conceived the project of supplanting Louis on the throne, and made his own palace the asylum of all the most reckless among the politicians who then swarmed in Paris. There the most seditious clubs held their meetings; there the most inflammatory speeches were delivered; and as all the attractions of sauntering, gambling, and prostitution were added, the orators never wanted an audience, and the Palais-Royal was crowded day and night. That the Duke and his friends did more than countenance the revolutionary party, that they spent pains and money in making serviceable adherents and recruiting among the destitute and criminal class seems certain, although the details can never be known. So early as the time of the elections the effect of all these disorganising agencies was seen in the formidable riots associated with the name of Réveillon. Réveillon was a manufacturer of wall-papers, a successful and, so far as is known, an estimable man; but he was alleged to have said (such reports were incessant in the revolutionary period and usually murderous) that a workman could live on fifteen *sous* a day. Accordingly, on April 27 and again on the 28th, his house was attacked and pillaged by a furious mob, at one time numbering thousands; and the sack lasted till all the available troops had been called out and many of the rioters had been killed or wounded. The authors of the riot were never traced, but they probably had some aim beyond that of injuring a private individual.

While disorder in Paris was coming to a head, the force available for keeping the peace was insignificant. The ordinary police, the watch

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mounted or on foot, numbered little over one thousand men. It could be reinforced by two regiments of the line, the *Gardes suisses* and the *Gardes Françaises*, which had permanent quarters in the capital. The Swiss regiment might be trusted to obey orders, but the French regiment was not to be counted upon. Many of the men had married Parisian women and were bound by family ties to the lower class of townspeople. The Duke of Orleans and the partisans of violent revolution seem to have employed every means of seduction upon the regiment. The new colonel, the Duc de Châtelet, was a martinet, harsh and doubly unpopular with soldiers who had been living under a relaxed discipline. After many acts of insubordination, there was discovered in the regiment a secret society whose members had bound themselves to obey no orders directed against the National Assembly. Several of the culprits were put under arrest and sent to the prison known as the Abbaye. On June 30 the mob rose and released the prisoners, and some dragoons and hussars who had been ordered out to suppress the riot fraternised with the mob. Matters could not rest here; and the revolutionary clubs, alarmed at their own boldness, sent a deputation to beg that the Assembly would intercede. The Assembly having solicited the King to show clemency and soothed the populace, the prisoners of their own free will returned to the Abbaye, whence they were presently released by royal order. Such an incident showed that the troops could not be trusted, and that the power of the Crown in Paris was merely nominal.

The municipal authority was equally infirm. In Paris, before the Revolution, the municipal officers were named by the Crown, and the citizens had no real voice in the administration. An elective municipality was generally desired, and had been demanded in the *cahiers* of Paris. Its germ already existed. The electors of the Third Estate in Paris had resolved that they would keep together after the elections in order to correspond with their deputies and to watch over the interests of the city; but for a time they had so far deferred to the government as not to hold any meeting. At length, alarmed by the royal declaration of June 23, they asked for the use of a room in the Hôtel de Ville; and, failing to get it, they met in a hall in the Rue Dauphine. After some heated speech and the suggestion of a civic guard, the electors voted an address to the National Assembly, which was carried to Versailles and received with gratitude. Although the electors in the eye of the law were mere private men, the municipal officers, conscious of their own weakness and unpopularity, and expecting soon to be superseded, were glad to call in such powerful auxiliaries. On the 27th, accordingly, they granted the electors the use of a room in the Hôtel de Ville. On July 1, after the rescue of the soldiers from the Abbaye, the electors published an address to the townspeople, urging them to respect the law. They next took into consideration the establishment of a civic guard. Their motive at this time seems to have been,

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not so much jealousy with regard to the King's intentions, as a wish to ensure the safety of Paris, then lying at the mercy of the lowest populace and of the disaffected soldiers. On July 11 the formation of such a guard was resolved upon.

Meantime the Marshal de Broglie had been making ostentatious preparations at Versailles. He had, writes Besenval, turned the palace into a headquarters and the gardens into a camp. He had put a regiment into the orangery, and he openly avowed his fears for the safety of the King and the Royal family. The Assembly took alarm, and on the motion of Mirabeau voted an address to the King asking that the troops might be withdrawn. Louis replied on the 10th that the disorders of Paris and Versailles had made it necessary to assemble the troops, but that nothing was designed against the freedom of the Assembly. If the deputies were still uneasy, he was willing to remove the session to Noyon or Soissons, and to take up his abode at Compiègne, where he could readily communicate with them. The Assembly refrained from any discussion of the royal letter, thus tacitly persevering in its request for the departure of the troops. But on July 11 the King sent Necker a note dismissing him from his office and enjoining him to quit the kingdom. Those of his colleagues who had generally acted with Necker, Montmorin, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Puységur, Secretary for War, La Luzerne, Secretary for the Navy, and Saint-Priest, Minister of the King's Household, were dismissed at the same time. The Baron de Breteuil, well known as one of the Queen's friends, succeeded Necker as chief minister, Marshal de Broglie took the place of Puységur, and Foulon and Laporte replaced Saint-Priest and La Luzerne respectively. The party hostile to the National Assembly had thus prevailed with the King; but their success was momentary and their overthrow decisive.

On July 12 the dismissal of Necker became known in Paris, and Camille Desmoulins at the Palais-Royal gave the signal for insurrection. The rioters, reinforced by a crowd of deserters from the *Gardes Françaises*, had one or two trivial and almost bloodless encounters with the troops. Although many thousands of soldiers were at this time assembled round Paris and although the Champ de Mars and the Champs Élysées were held in force, nothing serious was done to check the rising. A great number of the privates had been debauched by the democratic party, and the chiefs behaved with the same irresolute forbearance which had been so often displayed elsewhere. Besenval, who commanded in Paris, being left without orders and shunning responsibility, remained motionless until the mob had made such apparent way in seducing his men that he resolved to evacuate the city altogether. Meantime the insurgents beset the Hôtel de Ville, where the electors were sitting, and clamoured for their authorisation to repel by force the danger which hung over Paris. The electors would not go to that length, but could not hinder the mob from seizing all the arms in the Hôtel de Ville.

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Order was now at an end in Paris. The lawless multitude, which had been so long gathering there, plundered the gun-shops, broke open the prisons, burnt the *octroi* barriers, assailed the houses of unpopular persons, and attacked and robbed the passers in the streets. The electors could do nothing save decree the convocation of the districts. On July 13 they met and, as the imminent peril overbore all scruples of form, were joined by de Flesselles, Provost of the Merchants, and the other officers of the old municipal body. A standing committee was chosen and began to organise a civic guard of sixty battalions, one for each district. But it was impossible to master the rioters, who were hourly joined by crowds of deserters from the regular troops. All through that day Paris had the aspect of a town taken by storm. All communication with Versailles was stopped, all letters were opened, and the electors working at the Hôtel de Ville were in constant peril from the excited crowd which filled every part of the building. By evening the new civic guard were under arms, patrols were sent out, the streets were lighted, and a measure of safety was afforded to peaceable citizens. But the insurrection was not at an end. On the morning of July 14 one party attacked the Hôtel des Invalides, whence they carried off a large quantity of arms and ammunition. Another party with the same object attacked the Bastille.

The Bastille, once a fortress but for many years no more than a State prison, was ill qualified to stand a siege. Its high and massive walls were indeed impregnable to such artillery as the assailants had seized. But the garrison was small, amounting to eighty-two *invalides* and thirty-two Swiss. The cannon were of little use except for firing salvos, and there were provisions for two days only. De Launay, the Governor, behaved much like other officers at the same time. He made a hesitating defence; he received with courtesy the deputations which came to demand a surrender; and at length, finding that his men had no stomach to fight, he surrendered on promise of safety for himself and for them. The deserters from the *Gardes Françaises*, who had done most of the fighting that there was to do, tried hard to bring the prisoners along in safety, but before they could reach the Hôtel de Ville de Launay and several others were murdered in the most brutal fashion.

With the fall of the Bastille the insurrection may be said to have ended, as there was no longer any position in Paris held by the King's troops. But all through the day the tumult and confusion at the Hôtel de Ville were indescribable; and in the evening the murder of Flesselles gave a fresh proof of the lawlessness which reigned without. It was only by degrees, as the civic guard took a more regular shape and the worst ruffians who infested Paris were disarmed, that some degree of order was restored.

At Versailles the news of the dismissal of Necker and the outbreak

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in Paris had caused the Assembly to vote an address to the King, asking for the withdrawal of the troops and the formation of a civic guard. As the King returned a negative answer, the Assembly passed a decree repeating its demands, expressing its regret at the dismissal of Necker, and declaring the actual ministers responsible for any attack on the rights of the nation. When informed of this decree, the King still replied evasively. But, realising at length that the army could not be trusted and that the insurgents were masters of the capital, he came in person to the Assembly on the morning of July 15, and announced that the troops would be withdrawn. The dismissal of Breteuil and his colleagues and the return of Necker and his friends were necessary and immediate consequences of the revolution in Paris. Those who had been most actively hostile to Necker and the National Assembly felt that they were no longer safe. The Comte d'Artois, the Prince de Condé, the Prince de Conti, the Duc de Bourbon, Marshal de Broglie, and other councillors and courtiers of the same party went into exile. They were the first of the *Émigrés*. A quarter of a century was to pass before the few survivors could retrace their steps. Whatever the danger to which they were exposed, Louis might justly complain of those kinsmen who, after importuning him to ill-advised action, set the example of flight, and whose restless intrigues contributed not a little to his final ruin.

The electors of Paris, in their new character of municipal authority, had deputed some of their body to inform the Assembly of the late events and to ask for its protection. In return, the Assembly sent a deputation consisting of all the members for Paris and twenty-four others. They were greeted with effusion at the Hôtel de Ville, where by a sudden impulse Bailly was chosen Mayor of Paris and the Marquis de Lafayette Commandant of the National Guard. At the Archbishop's suggestion a *Te Deum* was sung in the cathedral. Bailly and his brethren then returned to Versailles to give an account of their mission. As the new municipality desired a visit from the King, Louis, after making his will and communicating, undertook a journey which was not without danger. The new Mayor presented the keys of the city, and, in words not meant to wound, referred to Henry IV, who had reconquered his people, whereas now the people had reconquered its King. But it will not seem strange that, when Louis had reached the Hôtel de Ville, embarrassment and humiliation should have disabled him from making the required harangue, which Bailly had to supply as best he could. Louis confirmed the nomination of Bailly as Mayor and Lafayette as Commandant, put the newly-devised tricolour cockade in his hat and set out on his return to Versailles through crowds shouting "Long live the King."

The Marquis de Lafayette was now in his thirtieth year. While yet a youth he had been led by a vague love of liberty and a longing for

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adventure to join the Americans in their revolt against Great Britain, and the Americans had repaid him with the rank of Major-General. His courage and popular manners gained their hearts. Even Washington became his close friend. After the surrender of Yorktown Lafayette returned to enjoy the applause of the Court and capital and took a foremost place among the liberal nobility. He sat in the Assembly of the Notables, where he demanded the summoning of the States General. Through his friend Dupor the concerned himself in the resistance of the *Parlements* to the ministers. When elected to the States General by the nobles of Auvergne, he had shown his good-will to the Third Estate; and after the union of the Orders he was one of the most highly considered men in the House. He had been the first to offer a draft Declaration of Rights. The office of Vice-President had been made for him to fill. As an officer of high rank and of some reputation, who was also zealous in the cause of freedom, he was marked out for the command of the new civic guard of Paris. He thus became a great power in the State, but he proved unequal to his task. Although honourable and well-meaning, he was vain and self-conscious; he wished to reconcile liberty with order, but wished still more to hold the balance of parties; and yet, with all his political ambition, he had no definite policy. He could not work in harmony with other men; he let precious occasions pass unused, and he wasted even that popularity which he loved so dearly and which might have been so serviceable. Within two years he had become impotent, and within three years he was an exile.

As Commandant, Lafayette had to organise the new civic guard, which took on his motion the name of National Guard. This force was to serve two purposes. It was to maintain order in Paris, the police and regular troops being no longer available. It was also to ensure the party of reform against any risk of military invasion for the future. The electors had at first fixed its strength at two hundred men from every district, or twelve thousand in all. If properly paid and disciplined such a force might have been able to keep the peace in Paris. But a much larger force might seem necessary to resist a counter-revolution. Accordingly the strength of a battalion was now fixed at 800 men, giving a total of 48,000. It has been said that Lafayette wished to recruit the National Guard from the middle class only and therefore made all the men enlisted provide themselves with a costly uniform. Since however a force of 48,000 would be fully one-third of all the men in Paris able to bear arms, it must have been very largely composed of men below the middle rank in life. To each battalion there was attached a more select company of *chasseurs* and another of grenadiers. A regiment of volunteer cavalry was formed, each trooper finding his own horse and arms. The *Gardes Françaises* were incorporated with the National Guard as a paid battalion. The officers of the lower grades were elected by the privates, but the staff officers were named by Lafayette. Lafayette used every art of

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popularity to get and keep control over his men; and well he might, for in an unpaid volunteer army discipline was scarcely known, and the National Guard was not really under the command of any authority whether military or civil.

Bailly remained in a most difficult position. The King had confirmed him in the office of Mayor; but he had no regular council to help him, for the assembly of electors was in truth an unauthorised body of private men. Their self-imposed duty was most laborious, dangerous and thankless. At the end of July they made way for a new body elected two by each district and therefore 120 in all; a number afterwards raised to 300. The new municipality met with as much resistance as the old assembly of electors. In Paris, as Bailly lamented, all wished to command, none were willing to obey. Those districts especially in which the democrats were powerful paid no heed to the orders or entreaties of the municipal council, but behaved as little republics; and, amid the dissolution of the State, there was no supreme authority, executive or judicial, to which the Mayor or his advisers could appeal.

In every great revolution some petty incident becomes symbolical, and thenceforward holds in the imagination of mankind a place altogether disproportionate. So it was with the fall of the Bastille. The Bastille was of slight strategic consequence; its capture was not a brilliant exploit, and was dishonoured by infamous cruelty. Only seven prisoners, most of them detained for good reason, were found within its walls. But to popular feeling both in France and abroad the Bastille was the embodiment of all that is most hateful in arbitrary power; and the fall of the Bastille seemed to announce a new age of freedom, justice, and humanity. Moreover the example of the Parisian insurrection was followed throughout France. In all the cities and towns the old municipal authorities were overturned and new elective authorities took their place. All the cities and towns enrolled their National Guards. At the same time the administrative and judicial system of the Monarchy broke down altogether. With the disappearance of the Intendants and sub-delegates, police, public works, and the collection of revenue came well-nigh to an end. The old Courts of Justice, from the manor Court to the *Parlement*, ceased to sit. The dwindling of the revenue made it almost impossible to pay or feed the troops, and so gave the last shock to expiring discipline. Insubordination became so general that the officers could no longer keep their men together, much less control their conduct. And, now that all means of repression were gone, the peasants in most of the Provinces rose in savage revolt. The country houses were pillaged and burnt, and the *seigneurs* with their families were driven by thousands into the towns or across the frontiers, happy indeed if they could escape, for some were murdered with every refinement of cruelty. It is unnecessary to recount the details which Taine has collected with so much industry and described with so much

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power. The strange and terrible sight of a great civilised people returning to chaos might have taught the philosophers of that age what the dissolution of the social compact signifies. Against this anarchy the municipalities and the National Guards struggled, often with zeal and courage; but they were novices, and their task might have appalled the maturest wisdom.

The state of Paris under its new Mayor and Commandant is typical of this period of the Revolution. It was the first task of Bailly to ensure the daily bread of seven hundred thousand human beings, amid such disorder within and without that commerce was dried up and the markets were never sure of forty-eight hours' supply. To maintain order was the chief business of Lafayette. This may not seem difficult for an experienced and popular general commanding thousands of troops, mostly drawn from classes interested in upholding the law. But soldiers seldom make an effective police, and of all soldiers volunteers are least suited to police duty. Many recruits, who had been attracted by a showy uniform and the roll of the drum, did not care to patrol disturbed quarters under volleys of stones and curses. Some of the National Guards sympathised with riot and outrage, and others did not abhor riot and outrage sufficiently. The deserters from the regular army, who came in great numbers, expected licence as the reward of patriotism, and the fashionable ideas of the hour made discipline impossible. Therefore, although Lafayette meant well and worked hard, he could not make Paris orderly or prevent murders like those of Foulon and Berthier. Nor could he expect any help from without. The National Assembly from time to time issued an idle proclamation, inviting the citizens to obey the law, or sent a deputation to implore mercy from murderers; but it had neither the will nor the means to employ the only arguments which criminals understand.

After the insurrection of July the press was free from all restraint and newspapers were multiplied in Paris. They were very small, it is true, for they gave very little information and were rather daily or weekly essays on political subjects than what we should term newspapers; yet some of them achieved a great sale and had a memorable influence. Every party had its own organs, but those which were most revolutionary sold best. Loustallot's journal, *The Revolutions of Paris*, which first appeared July 17, 1789, is said to have reached a sale of 200,000 copies. From it Camille Desmoulins took the hint for the title of his own paper, *The Revolutions of France and Brabant*, which began in November. For wit and style, if not for reason and humanity, he held the first place among the journalists of that age. The still more notorious *Friend of the People* by Marat first came out on September 12. Marat was at this time forty-seven years old; he was a doctor, a man of culture, and claimed to have made discoveries. But he was diseased in body and mind and embittered by ill-success and unfriendly criticism. As such

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men sometimes will, he took suspicion for wisdom, ferocity for public spirit, and hatred of a class for love of mankind. He has found apologists; but the *Friend of the People* will always be the most telling indictment against Marat. These and many other journals now forgotten inflamed the people of Paris and prepared the next and more violent phase of the Revolution. In the meantime they prompted continual resistance to the law and the municipal authority, and kindled disorder as fast as Bailly or Lafayette could put it out.

The National Assembly had no longer anything to fear from the King. The general anarchy disabled him from raising revenue, administering justice, or moving troops. So far from being able to assail others, he could not, as the events of October 5 and 6 showed, defend his own personal freedom. If a government could still be said to exist in France it was to be found in the Assembly and its Committees rather than in the sovereign and his Ministers. But the Assembly had vanquished the Crown only to pass under the yoke of the disorderly populace. Especially after its removal to Paris it was captive in fact although supreme in form. True wisdom would have disposed the Assembly to narrow the field of debate, to fix as soon as possible the principles of the new Constitution, and thus to shorten the painful period of suspense, during which France could have no rest within and no security abroad. The Assembly in its heat and inexperience took the opposite course. Before we touch upon its constructive labours, a brief notice of its procedure, its debates, and its party divisions seems necessary. For in all these respects it differed much from the parliaments with which we are best acquainted, and its peculiarities were of considerable moment in the history of the Revolution.

The maintenance of order in the National Assembly was for several reasons difficult. The Assembly, while it remained at Versailles, numbered about twelve hundred members — almost twice as many as the British House of Commons — men of a highly-strung race, whose education had in nowise hardened them to the rude shock of Parliamentary conflict; men without experience of public life, over-worked and over-excited. The *Salle des Menus Plaisirs* afforded room for a crowd of spectators who had never been trained to silence and respect. Noise and interruption were therefore incessant, and the speaker who would be heard had to strain his voice — an almost fatal hindrance to calm debate. After the migration to Paris in October, 1789, the Assembly met in a somewhat smaller room, the *manège*, or riding-school, of the Tuileries. By that time, however, so many members had fled or ceased from attending that there was still space for five or six hundred of the public, who were as unruly as before. Hence the sittings of the Assembly usually resembled a disorderly public meeting, and seldom maintained the dignity of a senate.

The Third Estate, we have seen, delayed to organise itself until it

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began the verification of powers. It was only on June 12 that it elected its first President. The President held office for a fortnight, and was assisted by six Secretaries, who were elected for a month. As yet there was no code of procedure. Mirabeau deposited on the *bureau* a printed copy of a digest of the rules of the House of Commons, which he had obtained from Romilly, and which might have been useful at least for suggestion, but the deputies would none of it. We are not English, they said, and we have no need of the English. Bailly tells us that he introduced three rules. A call of the House, hitherto incessant, was to be reserved for special occasions. In every case a member wishing to speak was to ask for leave. No member was to speak after the matter had once come to taking votes. It was only towards the end of July that the Assembly adopted its first body of rules, which occupies only eight octavo pages. Even so it contains some rules which were never observed, such as that forbidding all expressions of applause or dissent by the public. The Assembly, always afraid of the expiring power of the Crown, was too anxious to court the favour of the populace; and the sentimental politics of the time regarded every knot of idlers or ruffians as the French people and entitled to corresponding deference. A worse mischief than noise was the way in which the gallery politicians marked unpopular speakers for the vengeance of the Palais-Royal and the mob. At the close of the debate on the motion to assume the style of National Assembly, Malouet was assaulted by a stranger on the floor of the House; and several of those who voted with him received an intimation that their houses would be burnt down. "For every impartial man," he writes, "the Terror dates from July 14"; and, though he certainly was no dastard, he rarely went to the debates of the Assembly in Paris without his pistols. Throughout the French Revolution the party which claimed to be most democratic tried to silence discussion by fear, and showed the utmost contempt for freedom of conscience.

The deputies themselves often displayed the natural courtesy of Frenchmen, but had little self-command in debate. Disorder was frequent. "More than once to-day," Young wrote on June 15, 1789, "there were a hundred members on their legs at a time, and Monsieur Bailly absolutely without power to keep order." The majority was overbearing and the minority petulant. As time went on many of the deputies of the Right ceased from regular debate, laughed, and talked aloud, went out of the hall when the question was put, and affected to regard the proceedings as despicable. Had the Assembly taken occasional rest, irritation might have subsided; but, doubtless with good intentions, it worked too hard, sat long hours every day, even on Sunday, and allowed itself few and brief adjournments. Little economy of time was practised, and every irrelevant digression was welcome if it flattered the prevailing sentiment. A still graver nuisance were the deputations

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from every part of the kingdom and from all ranks of the people upon every conceivable topic. At first encouraged as an expression of popular sympathy in the struggle against the Court, they were afterwards endured from the motives which led the majority to connive at the disorder in the galleries. They reached their crowning absurdity in the deputation of the human race led by Anacharsis Clootz, which appeared on June 19, 1790, and was decreed the honours of the sitting.

For the more thorough discussion of legislative proposals the Assembly was divided into a number of *bureaux*, formed without election by taking from the alphabetical list of deputies certain numbers such as the 1st, the 31st, the 61st and so forth, and renewed every month in such a way that the old members should not come together again. These *bureaux* served some of the purposes of Committees in the British Parliament. Every legislative motion, after having been made and seconded, was discussed in the Assembly and either rejected or sent to the *bureaux*, where it was discussed again and sent back to the Assembly for the final debate and vote. Still more important were the Committees properly so called. There was a Committee for almost every department of State and for almost every branch of legislation, finance, army, navy, diplomacy, tithes, currency, feudal rights, etc. Several of these Committees encroached upon the ministerial departments; and the mutual ill-will of Ministers and Committees increased the disorders of the State. For the Committees often disdained to avail themselves of the special knowledge possessed by Ministers; and the Ministers and their subordinates, thwarted by those whom they regarded as intruders, often took refuge in sullen inaction. Even Necker after a time found his figures and arguments ignored by the Committee of Finance. The Committee of Reports, formed to receive and consider all petitions, letters, and addresses coming from all parts of France, became, says Ferrières, a species of department for Home Affairs; and the Committee of Researches, formed to unravel all conspiracies against the nation, was accused of employing the methods of the *ancien régime* against its friends. But it should be remembered that many of the Committees did legislative work of a high order.

The style of speaking current in the Assembly had also its effect on business. Under the old monarchy there had been no scope for political eloquence, but the orator might exert his powers either in the pulpit or at the bar or in academic harangues on various subjects. As the style of the clergyman or lawyer was professional and therefore in some degree unsuited to a popular assembly, it was the academic style which found most vogue in the debates. Each member who wished to speak chose a theme, framed a harangue, gave in his name, and when the time arrived went up into the *tribune* and spoke often with little or no regard to what others had said or to the actual stage of the discussion. Thus debating in our sense of the term was almost unknown. In the absence of party organisation, there was hardly any means of suppressing dunces or bores,

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and the loss of time was enormous. Even the patient reader, who does his best to place himself in the circumstances of that age, will be fatigued and disgusted with the perpetual strain of artificial emotion. In those days men worked hard to feel as much as possible, and wore every feeling on their sleeve. Consequently, when they thought themselves most natural they were most rhetorical; and when they wished to be pathetic or sublime, they too often ended in fustian. Although it is allowable and indeed necessary for the orator to flatter his audience, the pitch of adulation in these harangues would move the laughter of a modern senate. The Assembly is reminded at every turn that it has outshone the wisdom of all former ages, and that the eyes of the world are fixed in admiration on its proceedings. But the worst fault of all is the terrible want of matter. Scarcely any of the speeches have the substance and variety which comes of a true interest in concrete things and a rich experience of life. We find instead the endless manipulation of "principles," for the most part half truths imperfectly understood. The excited crowd which filled the galleries and domineered over the speakers doubtless enjoyed this resonant verbiage, and patronised it in preference to what Aulard scornfully terms "familiarity of language, the aridity of statistics, and the dryness of arguments."

Parties in the full sense of the word did not exist in the National Assembly. As parliamentary institutions were new in France, there could be no connexions with a long history and a slow growth, firmly united in support of definite principles, and powerful in their submission to acknowledged chiefs. In the National Assembly there were only such parties as arise in all large bodies of men with common business to discuss. Its members were brought together by general resemblance of opinion or even by agreement on a single issue; but these alliances were unstable and imperfect.

Originally the deepest division in the Assembly was between those who had desired and those who had resisted the union of the Three Estates. But when that conflict was over, a number of groups began to appear. The Extreme Right wished to preserve the ancient institutions entire with few, if any, improvements. It was a small party and did not contain a single statesman. D'Espréménil, once the champion of the *Parlement* against the King, and the Vicomte de Mirabeau, brother of the renowned orator, were its most notable leaders. Another group, sometimes described as the Right simply, wished for restraint upon the royal power, but preferred to effect this by reviving what they called the ancient Constitution of France. They would have given the States General the power of levying taxes and making laws, so long as the distinction between the Orders was upheld; but they refused to base the royal prerogative on parliamentary sanction. They were in fact Legitimists, who desired an aristocratic Constitution. Cazalès, the worthiest and sincerest leader of this group, stood high among the orators of the

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Assembly. The Abbé Maury was its stoutest and most unwearied fighter; yet he never impressed any man with the conviction that he was in earnest. The so-called Right Centre, otherwise the *Monarchiens* or *Impartiaux*, was a still more numerous body, but it presented various shades of opinion. All, however, aimed at a constitutional monarchy approaching more or less to the English, as described by Montesquieu and Blackstone, with the monarch still wielding considerable power and without the cabinet system. The ablest man in this party was Mounier, who was discouraged by his experience at Versailles, and, after the removal of the King to Paris, went into exile. The firmest was Malouet, once Intendant of the Navy at Toulon, an official of the best type, thoughtful, enlightened, and humane. He fought his losing battle with a temper unusual anywhere, most unusual in the National Assembly. On the same side were Lally-Tollendal, Clermont-Tonnerre, and Bergasse. But, in spite of talent, character, and numbers, this party made little impression. It was weakened in the first instance by its own divisions. It was weakened still more by the perversity of the high Royalists, who did not see that union was necessary to save the Crown, and denounced statesmen like Malouet and Mounier as traitors and incendiaries. It was also weakened by the circumstance that its ideal was at variance with the current political philosophy. For, while the English polity, resting on a balance of opinions and interests, has a historic source and a practical aim, the philosophy of Rousseau's *Contrat Social*, a tissue of abstractions above either practice or history, treats all modified forms of self-government as deceptions. Another weakness lay in the fact that this party cared most for political reform, while the bulk of the people cared most for social and economic changes. Finally, the Right Centre was exposed without defence to the methodic terrorism of the popular party. It has been seen at what risk Malouet discharged his duty. For voting in favour of the royal veto in legislation, Clermont-Tonnerre received a letter assuring him that his house would be burnt. When Clermont-Tonnerre and his friends opened the Club of the Friends of the Monarchical Constitution, the democrats raised a riot which terrified the municipality into closing it. Constantly defeated in the House and menaced in the street, the party dwindled away. Malouet reckoned, perhaps with some exaggeration, that in October, 1789, they could muster three hundred votes; a year and a half later they had shrunk to fifty. To the Right Centre the term Royalist is often applied in a way apt to mislead, as they were neither the only nor the most zealous Royalists.

On the other side of the House, the Left was roughly coincident with the Constitutionals, so called because they made the Constitution of 1791. This party was also known as the Ministerials, a name adopted when in May, 1790, they founded the Club of 1789, and as the *Feuillants*, a name given when they founded the Club of the *Feuillants* in July, 1790. Including the greater part of the Third Estate and for a long time the

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greater part of the *curés*, it was from the first very strong; and, as its opponents more and more withdrew from public life or even fled the country, its strength increased till in the later months of the National Assembly it could do as it pleased. Its political principles may be gathered from the Constitution of 1791, and can best be dissected when we trace the growth of that Constitution. It was not consciously destructive, except in the case of privileges. It wished to preserve the Monarchy, which it rendered null; the connexion of Church with State, which it made offensive to Catholic consciences; and the rights of property, which it allowed to be swept away wholesale. At the same time its social prejudices, its temper, its political philosophy, were all far more revolutionary than it knew; and, while it imagined itself to be preparing a stable order of society, it made almost inevitable the state of anarchy which ensued. It was full of grudge against the First and Second Estates, unbounded in its optimism and contempt for experience, childlike in its acceptance of the *Contrat Social* as the textbook of political wisdom. As time went on, an internal change took place in this party. The group which at one time led in revolution, the group which comprised Duport, Alexandre Lameth, and Barnave, and was termed by Mirabeau The Thirty Voices, came to see that they had overshot the mark in trying to reduce the executive power, and tried, though vainly, to raise it up again. The Extreme Left, the virtually republican group, were at first very few. Among them were several men who afterwards filled a great place in the Revolution, Buzot, Dubois-Crancé, Pétion, and Robespierre. The son of a respectable lawyer of Arras, Robespierre had been left an orphan at a very early age, had been adopted by his maternal grandfather, and had found a patron in the Bishop of his native city. After passing with credit through school and college, he had been appointed criminal judge of the diocese of Arras, but had laid down his office rather than pass a sentence of death. He had then made a practice at the bar and had gained some small literary successes. In 1789 he was elected a deputy of the Third Estate of Artois. But his style struck the House as provincial and drew from the Right jeers and sarcasms which were not forgiven. By dint of practice Robespierre formed a style to which the Assembly would listen; and by dint of concentration he gained a certain influence, although he was never popular. That absolute assurance of his own purity and of the truth of every proposition in the *Contrat Social*, which he kept to the end, was already unmistakable, and could not fail to impress hearers so full of sentiment and of dogma. But the Extreme Left as a party had very little power and had hardly any influence until after the flight to Varennes; nor did they find an opportunity of giving effect to their principles until after the dissolution of the National Assembly.

In this brief enumeration of parties and of groups no place has been found for the greatest member of the National Assembly, Mirabeau.

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Mirabeau was never the recognised leader of any party, although at times he swayed the whole House. For this there were several reasons. He was, we have seen, a practical man, not a man of system, where almost every man was systematic. For, while he wished to combine parliamentary freedom with a powerful executive, and in this approached Mounier and the Right Centre, he had no particular bias in favour of the English system; he took account of the national temperament, and he saw that what attracted the masses was not so much self-government as the destruction of privilege. Hence his political action was not controlled by party ties, it was prompted by circumstances; he aided or opposed different parties in turn, often overpowering resistance but never winning full confidence; and, though he set his mark on French history, he never fulfilled his ambition either as parliamentary chief or as administrator. We can never understand Mirabeau's career in the National Assembly if we conceive of him as of English statesmen who by a regular course of promotion rise to the command of a disciplined party, and rule the State by the will of the people in the name of the sovereign. Mirabeau was only an adventurer of genius in a dissolving society.

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CHAPTER VII

THE CONSTITUTION OF 1791

We have seen that almost all the *cahiers* expressed a desire for political self-government, and that the *cahiers* of the Third Estate at least demanded the making of a new Constitution. Many of the *cahiers* entered into some detail regarding its provisions. Many also required that its principles should be enacted before any supply was granted to the Crown. As soon, therefore, as the fusion of the Orders had been effected, the Assembly undertook to give France a Constitution. The task seemed light, for the spirit of the majority was confident to excess. "Politics," said Sieyès, "is a science which I believe myself to have completed." "The Constitution," said Barère, "is already made in the minds of all. There can be no laborious travail here; the Constitution is perhaps the work of a day, because it is the result of the enlightenment of an age." Dumont has remarked that "every member of the Assembly thought himself capable of everything; there have never been seen so many men imagining that they were all legislators, and that they had come there to redress all the wrongs of the past, to remedy all the errors of the human spirit, and to assure the happiness of future ages." Nor will any person conversant with the memoirs and speeches of that time think that Dumont has exaggerated. In reality the business of framing a constitution proved very arduous, and the failure of the National Assembly was well-nigh complete.

The difficulty did not arise from the strength of the old institutions of France. Within the space of two years from the meeting of the States General these had been almost totally destroyed, in part by legislative action, still more by popular violence. The royal authority went to pieces after the insurrection of July in Paris and the Provinces, which ended the old administrative system and studded the land with new municipalities. The same insurrection showed that no trust could be put in the regular army, and raised up an innumerable militia devoted to the cause of the Revolution. The rising of the peasants in so many Provinces, the burning of manor-houses and manorial records, and the hue and cry raised after the *seigneurs*, ended the ancient agrarian system

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and led directly to the memorable sitting of August 4, when the feudal tenures, and the privileges of Orders, cities, and Provinces, were virtually abolished. The feudal Courts of justice were thus swept away; and the royal Courts of justice, even the *Parlements*, were extinguished without effort in the following year. With equal ease all the ancient historic divisions of France were effaced and the land laid out in a new system of departments, districts, and cantons. The abolition of tithe and the confiscation of Church lands destroyed the wealth of the clergy; the suppression of the religious Orders reduced their numbers; and the "civil constitution" caused a schism among them and among the laity. Never has an ancient civilised people in so short a space of time made such wholesale havoc of its old institutions. The Assembly had little need to use force or skill in clearing the ground, for its adversaries were weak, timid, and ill-judging, and the insurgent masses constantly forestalled its decrees. Society seemed to dissolve itself, the better to receive an entirely new mould from the legislature.

The obstacles to sound legislation were, however, most formidable. Even the wisest and firmest statesmen might despair of reducing to order a people which had so utterly lost all respect for law and was rent by such savage hatreds. The inexperience and presumption of the majority in the Assembly were still worse evils. Their political philosophy was little more than unreflecting reaction against the past. Because France had been oppressed by absolute monarchy, they denied to the executive that strength without which no citizen can be safe. Because the French people had been almost without means of expressing its wants, they multiplied elective assemblies until the orderly despatch of business became impossible. Knowing almost nothing about public affairs, they did not suspect with what reserve the lawgiver should apply the maxims of speculative writers; and when they found in books a formula which flattered their passions they took it for absolute truth and framed their measures accordingly. Thus, although they cared little for Montesquieu, who was conservative in his temper and inductive in his method, they were fascinated by his doctrine that the separation of the legislative, executive, and judicial powers one from another is the primary condition of political liberty. It is true that no general maxim can restrain the love of power, and that in practice the Assembly was always encroaching upon the executive sphere, which in words it left to the King. But in the Constitution of 1791 the principle of the separation of powers was applied with the most uncritical stringency. The Assembly seems to have combined it with the more extravagant assertion of Mably, that the executive power always has been and always will be the enemy of the legislative. Still stronger and more mischievous was the influence which Rousseau exerted over a legislature, like himself dogmatic and sentimental. In his other writings Rousseau sometimes showed a sense of the complexity of real politics, but in the *Contrat Social*, the

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Bible of the Constituent Assembly, he set forth an absolutely rigid and impracticable ideal. He emboldened the majority to scorn experience, to treat men as though they were all equivalent quantities, to think that a great society can be moulded and remoulded at the legislator's will. The Constitution of 1791 was not, and could not be, conformable to Rousseau's maxims; but it was too much imbued with his spirit to be useful or permanent.

A Committee was named on July 6, 1789, to consider the procedure advisable in framing the Constitution. The Constitution was, after a final revision, enacted on September 3, 1791. More than two years, therefore, were spent in the work; and debates on the Constitution were interspersed with debates on the many other topics discussed in the National Assembly. The new Constitution of France must be sought not only in the document which bears that name, but in a number of statutes which changed the distribution of political power. To trace the history of each in detail would require several volumes. It is enough here to note the conflict of opinions on a few cardinal points, and to sketch the outline of the new Constitution. We can thus judge the spirit and character of the whole, and measure its effect upon the history of France.

Mounier was reporter of the preliminary Committee. Following the suggestion of certain *cahiers*, and the wish of some of his colleagues, rather than his own judgment, he proposed to begin with a declaration of the rights of man. The Assembly approved, and the matter was soon taken out of his hands, for a crowd of speculative politicians offered their projects. On July 14 the Assembly chose the first Committee to draft the Constitution. It consisted of Mounier, Talleyrand, Sieyès, Clermont-Tonnerre, Lally-Tollendal, Le Chapelier, Bergasse, and Champion de Cicé, Archbishop of Bordeaux, who ceased to be a member when called to the Royal Council. On this Committee the admirers of English institutions were strong, and Mounier, still at the height of fame, was the master spirit. He also drew up a Declaration of the Rights of Man, to be published only as the preface to the new Constitution. On August 1 the Assembly began to discuss these drafts, over which it wearied itself for many days, while France was without a government and French society was in dissolution. In vain Mirabeau, who had acted as reporter of a special committee chosen to examine all the draft declarations, advised that they should adjourn the subject of the Declaration until the Constitution had been finished. It was not until August 27 that the Assembly accepted a form of Declaration differing more or less from all the original drafts. It contained some useful maxims of legislation, mixed with vague and unproved propositions, which could be of little use save as pretexts for disorder. No doubt the Assembly wished to gain fresh impetus from the nation by a solemn publication of the principles on which it hoped to remodel France.

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But a still more powerful motive was the childlike belief in every kind of effusion — oaths, addresses, orations, and declarations — which was almost universal in 1789. During the next ten years the plainest rights of man were so often and so grossly outraged that the public came to feel very differently.

The proceedings on the night of August 4 were of more moment for French institutions than anything yet effected by the Committee. A report on the disorder in the Provinces had been presented on the previous day; and the Assembly was considering a declaration, which might appease the multitude, when two noblemen, the Vicomte de Noailles and the Duc d'Aiguillon, proposed that the Assembly should solemnly proclaim the equality of taxation for all, the suppression of some of the "feudal" burdens, and the right to redeem the rest at so many years' purchase. Other nobles rose to support this proposal, which called forth a series of motions all tending to the relief of the people. The Vicomte de Beauharnais demanded that criminal punishments should henceforward be the same for all offenders, and that all citizens should be admitted alike to the whole range of the public service. The Bishop of Chartres moved the abolition of the game laws. The Duc de La Rochefoucauld urged the enfranchisement of all the serfs remaining in the kingdom. Thibault, a *curé*, asked the Assembly to approve the suppression of the *casuel*. The Archbishop of Aix proposed the abolition of the *gabelle* and the *aides*. The Duc de Châtelet demanded that tithes in kind should be commuted; and the Bishop of Uzès recognised the right of the nation to dispose of the possessions of the Church. Other demands and propositions poured in. In all quarters of the House deputies rose to renounce privileges on behalf of the provinces or cities which they represented. The Assembly, now at the highest pitch of enthusiasm, embodied a number of these motions in decrees. Dupont of Nemours, the Economist, was almost the only person to hint a doubt as to such haste in making laws about matters so various and so weighty. Lally-Tollendal passed up to the President a note: "Nobody any longer has any self-control; break up the sitting." It did not close, however, till the Archbishop of Paris had proposed a *Te Deum* of thanksgiving, till the Duc de Liancourt had moved that a medal be struck to commemorate the Fourth of August, till Lally-Tollendal himself had moved to proclaim Louis XVI the "Restorer of French Liberty," and until the Assembly had decreed all these motions.

On this memorable night many of the nobles and clergy displayed the best and most generous impulses of the French character. When we think of the doom for which these patriots were too often reserved, we cannot refuse our deepest compassion as well as our respect. Yet such is not the way to legislate. Nothing was gained for public order by announcing all at once the abolition of so many laws and so many forms of property. Even as the declaration that all the existing taxes

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were illegal had far more effect on the taxpayer than the injunction to pay them while the Assembly was sitting, so the declaration that feudalism was abolished had far more effect on the peasant than the reminder that certain territorial claims were valid and must continue to be satisfied until the Assembly had provided for their redemption. The actual consequence was that the *seigneurs* lost everything, and that thousands were reduced to beggary. If the Assembly wished to extinguish manorial rights in an equitable manner, it should have fixed the terms of redemption, arranged the procedure, and guaranteed the necessary funds, before proclaiming that these rights no longer existed. When it came to deal with the details, it was fettered by the language of its own decrees. Dumont was justified in observing of the Fourth of August that "never had such an immense work been despatched in a few hours. What would have required a year of pains and meditation was proposed, discussed, voted, determined by acclamation." Mirabeau had not been present, but, hasty as was his own temperament and averse though he was to privilege, he saw the error. "Just like our Frenchmen," he remarked: "they are an entire month wrangling over syllables, and in a night they overturn the whole of the ancient order of the kingdom."

The sitting of August 4, therefore, like the insurrections which led to its decrees, was purely destructive in its results. We may date from that night the disappearance of French feudalism. The nobles lost in their seigniorial Courts the last remnant of public functions spared by ages of royal encroachment; and the extinction of their manorial revenue took from them a very great part of their riches. At the same time the way was opened to a still more formidable invasion of the property of the Church. All these economic and social changes prepared the way for a simple and highly democratic Constitution; and to the labours of the constitutional Committee we must here return.

On August 28, as soon as the debate on the Declaration of Rights had closed, Mounier reported to the Assembly the order of discussion recommended by the Committee, and presented the draft articles on the first topic, the Crown and its powers. Three days later Lally-Tollendal read the report of the same Committee upon the organisation of the legislature. It was to consist of three parts: the King, a Senate, and a Representative Chamber. The Committee, wavering between royal nomination and various elective methods, had left the mode of choosing the senators undetermined. It proposed that the King should have in legislation an absolute veto, although no initiative. Thus the creation of a Senate and the royal veto became the first subjects of constitutional discussion in the National Assembly.

A Senate, or Second Chamber, was for different reasons unacceptable to both sides of the Assembly. That the Left should dislike it was a direct inference from their political theory. Rousseau's *Contrat Social*, which regards the assembled people as alone sovereign and denounces

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even the representative system as a fraud, implicitly condemns any check on, or delay of, popular resolutions. The Left were haunted with a fear of royal and aristocratic reaction, which seems hardly intelligible now that we can measure the incapacity of the King, the weakness of the privileged orders, and the revolutionary ardour of the masses. They deemed that a Senate even of the American type might hinder the fulfilment of their principles; and a House of Lords like the English they of course rejected.

But the Right were also hostile, or at least indifferent, to the establishment of a Second Chamber. The fanatics were against it, lest it should steady and save the Revolution. "If you were to set up two Chambers," said Maury, "your Constitution might last." These men, despairing of any good save from the excess of ill, wished things to come to the worst in order that they might come to reaction after. Many more were influenced by jealousy. A Second Chamber, if it were to have a conservative force, would be largely if not entirely composed of great nobles and prelates. But the French *noblesse*, although it might look down upon the Third Estate, had a keen feeling of equality within its own circle. Holding that one gentleman is as good as another, the lesser nobles highly resented the superiority affected by the great, and thought it intolerable that the duke or marquis should gain all the power which a seat in a Second Chamber implies, while the squire was to descend to the level of a common citizen. The majority, which had come into the Assembly against its will, disliked the minority which had come of its own accord; and since these liberals, full of admiration for England, were the warmest upholders of a Second Chamber, the conservative nobles, always destitute of political insight, gratified their spleen by helping to throw out the proposal. In like manner the inferior clergy, hating their chiefs and sympathising with the popular party, had no mind to create a Second Chamber, which would exalt the Bishop still further above the *curé*. As for the large number of deputies who had no very strong opinion, they were cowed by the threats of violence which resounded in all the popular clubs and newspapers. The result was seen in the final division. On September 10, 849 deputies voted for a single Chamber; 89 only for two Chambers, and 122 declared themselves "insufficiently informed." This was the first crushing defeat sustained by the admirers of the English Constitution.

It was speedily followed by another. For some time past the questions, Shall the King have an absolute veto? or a limited, a suspensive veto? or no veto whatever? had been under debate. Here again the majority of the Left were adverse to the recommendation of the Committee. If the principle of the separation of powers were rigidly applied, the King, as wielding the executive, must be refused the smallest measure of legislative power. On the principles of the *Contrat Social*,

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the royal veto was equally to be rejected, as an encroachment on the sovereignty of the people; in Sieyès' phrase, a *lettre de cachet* directed against the general will. Will, said Rousseau, cannot be delegated, although power may; and the people cannot, even for a moment, part with its sovereignty. If this were admitted, the King might be an agent to execute the will of the legislature, but he could have no voice in legislation. Apart from these speculative considerations, the Left distrusted the King much, the Ministers more, the Queen and courtiers most of all. They were afraid that the absolute veto might bar all further progress, and did not pause to reflect that, the legislature having complete control over the revenue, the King could hardly use his negative voice except in cases where he might with some hope of success appeal to the nation from its representatives.

Those who, like Mounier, valued English precedents, do not seem to have noticed that the King of England had in reality lost the power of rejecting Bills. Hardly any foreigner then understood that, apart from the existence of a Second Chamber, the only real check upon capricious legislation in England is the responsibility of the Cabinet, which controls the majority in the Commons. Yet Mounier might expect far more support for the absolute veto than he had gained for the Second Chamber. Prudent men had already begun to note the impulsive temper of the Assembly, still more its submission to clamour from without, and were anxious to give these failings a counterpoise. Among such men was Mirabeau, who had declared in the debate of June 15 that he would rather live at Constantinople than in France, if the legislature were to dispense with the royal sanction. On this point at least all the high royalists, all who had opposed the union of the Orders, agreed with Mirabeau and Mounier. The opposing forces were therefore well matched; and the debate was kept up for several days. Sieyès spoke with all his usual point against allowing the King any veto whatever. Mounier put forth all his powers in defence of the recommendations of the Committee. Mirabeau spoke on the same side, although the feeling that he had to maintain an unpopular cause seems to have damped his natural fire, and he refrained from voting in the final division. The event was perhaps determined by Necker's excess of caution. Lafayette, who wished to be popular and was swayed by American precedent, wrote earnestly to Necker and Mounier in favour of the suspensive veto, warning them of the disasters which might occur if they tried to obtain more for the King. Barnave, Duport, Alexandre Lameth, and other leaders of the Left, repeated these prayers and warnings. Mounier was unshaken; but Necker and some of his colleagues told their friends in the House that, unless the absolute veto could be carried by a decisive majority, it would be better to vote for the suspensive veto. Necker persuaded the Council to declare for the suspensive veto, and to send to the Assembly a memorandum stating

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this resolution. Mounier, who divined its import, induced the Assembly to decide that the cover should not be opened until after the division. But Necker's known irresolution and the menaces of the democrats ensured Mounier's defeat. The division took place on September 11. That the King should have a veto was resolved by 730 voices to 143; that the veto should be merely suspensive was resolved by 673 voices to 325. This was the second defeat of the party which derived its political principles from England, and it was decisive.

Mounier, Bergasse, Lally-Tollendal, and Clermont-Tonnerre now resigned their seats on the Constitutional Committee; whereupon their colleagues, who had differed with them regarding the veto, did likewise. The first Constitutional Committee thus came to an end. On September 15 the Assembly named a new Committee, including, besides Sieyès, Talleyrand, and Le Chapelier, Thouret, Target, Desmeuniers, Rabaut-Saint-Étienne, and Tronchet. The new Committee contained not a single representative of the nobles, and Talleyrand was only in name a representative of the clergy. It represented the main body of the Left, who desired to preserve the form while destroying the substance of monarchy. The Constitution of 1791 was in the main its work.

Soon after the second Committee had been formed the removal of the King and the National Assembly from Versailles to Paris gave the Revolution new energy. The insurrection of October 5 and 6 has been described by different witnesses with countless differences of detail, but its object and character are clear. The extreme popular party was enraged at the slow progress made by the Assembly and full of distrust of the King. The King might well listen to those among his family and friends who pressed him to quit Versailles for some place where he might regain his freedom of action and appeal to the loyalty of the Provinces. Enough was known to raise suspicion; and one or two incidents, small in themselves, served as the pretext for a tumult. Since the troops assembled under Marshal de Broglie had been sent back to their quarters, the palace of Versailles had been entrusted to the *gardes du corps* and the National Guard of the town. These were now reinforced by the Flanders regiment. On October 1 the officers of the *gardes du corps* gave a banquet in the palace theatre to the officers of the Flanders regiment and of the National Guard. After the banquet the King, Queen, and Dauphin appeared for a few moments, while the company drank their healths with fervour. When the royal party had retired the guests grew clamorous, uncivil things were said about the National Assembly, and white cockades were offered by *gardes du corps* to the officers of the National Guard, and accepted by some of them in lieu of the tricolour badges. As the story of the banquet got about, it was adorned with many circumstances more or less fabulous; and the public was given to understand that traitors were hatching a grave military plot against the Assembly and the nation. That there was such a plot

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has never been proved, and that plotters worth considering would betray themselves in this boyish fashion is most unlikely.

But nothing more was needed to raise Paris. There the causes which had kept up disorder were still at work. Although the harvest of 1789 had been bounteous, the lawless state of the country and constant interference with the corn trade rendered food dear. Many rich inhabitants had left Paris, and foreign visitors were dwindling. Great numbers of domestic servants and artisans were thus thrown out of work and in risk of starvation. What with idleness, hunger, zeal for the Revolution, or mere love of mischief, there were thousands ready to riot when the orators of the clubs, the agents of the Duke of Orleans, and the newspapers should give the signal. Had the orderly citizens, the National Guards, and their chief, been resolute to suppress tumult, this might have mattered little; but the weakness of their action suggests that they likewise wished to see the King and the Assembly at Paris, and under their own influence. On the morning of October 5 a crowd, in the first instance chiefly of women, although afterwards supported by men, assembled in the Place de Grève and began an assault on the Hôtel de Ville. Feebly resisted by the National Guards on duty, they forced their way in, seized a quantity of arms and were about to hang an *abbé* whom they chanced to find there, when a certain Stanislas Maillard, who had taken part in the attack of the Bastille, raised the cry "To Versailles." The women followed him, and on the march were joined by crowds of male rioters. Lafayette had been sent for, and had arrived after the women had left the Hôtel de Ville. He had put the National Guard under arms, but they were divided in mind. Many of the battalions, we are assured by Thiébault, would have obeyed an order to close the roads leading to Versailles, and such an order must have baffled the insurrection. Lafayette did not give the order but sat on horseback for several hours in the Place de Grève, vainly haranguing the National Guards and the populace, till it became known that other riotous crowds were following the first to Versailles, when the municipality authorised Lafayette to lead his forces thither also. He set out a little before five o'clock.

Meantime the horde of men and women had reached Versailles, had forced their way into the hall where the Assembly was sitting, had demanded a decree lowering the price of bread, and showed themselves determined to remain there all night. The King had come back from hunting to find Versailles in an uproar. The women had sent him a deputation which he received graciously; but, when the deputation returned, they were nearly murdered by the rest. About midnight Lafayette arrived with his troops. Amid rain and mud the National Guards and the mob bivouacked in the avenues and open spaces of Versailles; and Lafayette, after taking what proved ineffectual measures for the safety of the palace, retired to rest just before daybreak. A little later the Paris mob found an unguarded door, made their way into the

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palace, and assailed the Queen's apartment, killing two of the *gardes du corps* who strove to withstand them. Marie-Antoinette had barely time to fly to the King's apartment, when the rioters rushed into her room, and stabbed the bed with their pikes. But now the alarm had been given; and a detachment of the National Guards appeared in time to stop further violence and save a number of the *gardes du corps* from instant death. At length Lafayette himself came and induced the King and Queen to show themselves on a balcony to the crowd that filled the court. By announcing the King's resolution to confirm the Declaration of the Rights of Man and to come to Paris he turned the fury of the mob into momentary good humour. On receiving this intelligence the Assembly declared itself inseparable from the person of the King and prepared to accompany him. Part of the rioters returned at once, bearing their trophy, the heads of the murdered *gardes du corps*. The King and the royal family left Versailles at noon and, moving slowly with the mixed horde of populace and National Guards, did not reach Paris till nightfall. They took up their abode in the Tuileries and were soon followed by the National Assembly, which established itself in the *manège* or riding-school. A judicial enquiry into the events of October 5 and 6 could not be avoided, but had no practical result, although it cast the deepest suspicion upon the Duke of Orleans, who fell into general discredit and presently accepted a mission to England as the least shameful manner of retreat.

The removal of the King and the Assembly from Versailles to Paris opens a new period in the Revolution. On July 14 Louis may be said to have lost his crown; on October 6 he lost his personal freedom, and the Assembly, deliberating in the clutch of the Parisian mob, was almost as much a prisoner as the King. It did not yield without a struggle. For a little while strenuous efforts were made to enforce order. When the mob hung a baker named François, two of the murderers were promptly tried and executed. Mirabeau's bill giving the municipal authorities extraordinary power to deal with unlawful assemblies was voted by a large majority. But the respite thus gained was short; and all who were unpopular felt themselves in constant peril. A new emigration began, and more than two hundred deputies of the Right asked for passports; so that the Assembly resolved to deny them to all who could not assign sufficient cause. Mounier, having returned to Dauphiné and vainly tried to raise the provincial Estates against the Assembly, spent the winter in retirement and afterwards took refuge at Geneva.

From this period also dates the growing power of the Jacobin Club. It had its origin in a small group of Breton deputies who, while the Assembly was yet at Versailles, had met occasionally to discuss the questions of the hour. This Breton Club, when the Assembly came to Paris, held its meetings in the convent of the Jacobins and opened them

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to the public. It thus became a large popular society. It had always been a gathering of the Left, but for a long time was not exclusive. Barnave and the Lameths were at first the favourite speakers. Mirabeau himself was president of the Club so late as December, 1790. But that tendency of the democratic party to grow ever narrower and more fanatical, which might be seen in so many other places, was at work among the Jacobins also. Before the dissolution of the Assembly the Lameths and Barnave had seceded from the Club, and Robespierre and Pétion had gained the ascendancy. Meanwhile the Club had, by means of its affiliated societies, spread its influence far beyond Paris. It abetted all the disorders of the capital and the Provinces and did its best to make government impossible, pending the time when its leaders should govern.

These events completely changed the relation of parties in the National Assembly. Outnumbered and hopeless, the Right might prolong the struggle, but could not hope for victory; while the Left had to encounter only so much resistance as kept them eager and united. Mirabeau, indeed, was convinced that the Revolution could not be brought to a happy end unless some authority were restored to the Crown. Almost immediately after the October insurrection he had begun that secret correspondence with the King and Queen which paints so vividly the disorders of the time and the workings of his own powerful but unequal genius. In the Assembly he might snatch an occasional success, as when he carried a decree that the regency should always vest in the eldest male relative of a King under age; but he had no following and could exert no steady power. Nay, he fell under the suspicion of the popular party, and had to redeem the votes and speeches most in accord with his own opinions by outbreaks which aroused the distrust of the King and Queen. He thus failed entirely to control the course of events.

The relation of the King's Ministers to the National Assembly was the next subject of grave constitutional debate. The familiar maxim of the separation of powers led to the inference that the chiefs of the executive should be excluded from the legislature, and the American precedent might be quoted on that side. Yet the exclusion had already proved inconvenient. In July the Assembly, while disclaiming executive power, had expressed its regret at Necker's departure, and had asked the King to dismiss his new Ministers. Since then Louis had bestowed office on three well-known members of the Assembly, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, whom he made Keeper of the Seals, the Comte de La Tour du Pin, whom he made Minister of War, and the Archbishop of Vienne, whom he admitted to the Council; and the Assembly had thanked him for this mark of confidence, although it excluded the persons preferred from any further share in its proceedings. In his secret correspondence with the King, Mirabeau had recommended him to

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form a Ministry entirely of men chosen from the Assembly. Some of the most distinguished chiefs of the Left, the Lameths, Duport, and Barnave, agreed with Mirabeau on this subject, and wished to replace the actual Ministers, including Necker, who had lost much of his popularity, by deputies of known liberal opinions. They encouraged Mirabeau to concert measures with Lafayette; and Lafayette, while he thought that Necker could not be spared, raised no objection to the principle that Ministers should sit in the legislature. In a plan for a new Ministry, which Mirabeau submitted to Lafayette, he proposed to retain Necker as chief, with the Archbishop of Bordeaux and La Tour du Pin, but to fill the other ministerial offices with deputies, reserving for himself only a seat in Council without a department. Counting on Lafayette's good-will and on his own ascendancy, now at its height, Mirabeau felt strong enough to raise the question in the House; and on November 6, in the course of a financial debate, he took the opportunity of asserting that the Ministers would never be in real accord with the Assembly until they had seats there. The State, he said, must be helpless, while the legislative and executive powers, regarding each other as enemies, feared to discuss the public interest in common. He therefore moved that, pending the settlement of the Constitution, the King's Ministers should have a consultative voice in the Assembly. Such admirers of the English system as remained, notably Clermont-Tonnerre, welcomed the suggestion; and nobody had condemned it, when the debate stood adjourned.

But the English practice of choosing the Ministers from the legislature was for opposite reasons distasteful to the Right and the Left. Many of the Right regarded it as a means of yet further weakening the Crown. The King would be forced to take the most popular deputies for his Ministers, and his executive power would be transferred to the Assembly. On the Left many feared that Ministers, who were members of the Assembly, would possess means of terrifying or corrupting their colleagues, and that the ablest deputies would be seduced from their principles by the hope of office and favour. Some rumour of a parliamentary Ministry, in which Mirabeau would find a place, had got abroad and had alarmed jealous patriots. Nothing is stranger in the French Revolution than the all-pervading suspicion at work under the fair surface of public spirit and fraternal love; and nothing did more to blight the promise of a better and happier order of society. When the debate was resumed on the following day, a young member, named Lanjuinais, who lived to earn an honourable fame, moved a decree to the effect that no deputy should be allowed to accept any place or pension from the executive during the existence of the legislature or for three whole years after. A reference to the aims of Mirabeau aroused all the jealousy of his colleagues; and Mirabeau felt that there remained no hope of success. He closed a speech of scorn and defiance with an

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amendment narrowing the prohibition to "M. de Mirabeau, deputy of the commons of the *sénéchaussée* of Aix." The Assembly adopted an amendment to the original motion, by which deputies were to be excluded from office only so long as the Assembly should last. Mirabeau, who ascribed his defeat to the ill faith of Lafayette and the enmity of the Ministers, hoped for some time that it might be reversed; but the opportunity never came, and the principle asserted by Lanjuinais was embodied in the Constitution.

How little the principles which guided the Assembly in forming the Constitution would admit of any real power in the executive, was seen in the debates upon the right of making treaties and declaring war. In the spring of 1790 the dispute between the English and Spanish governments over the region adjoining Nootka Sound on the western side of North America had reached such a height that war seemed probable, and a naval armament was set on foot in England. Spain claimed the help of France under the Family Compact, and her claim was acknowledged by Louis and his Ministers. Montmorin therefore informed the President of the Assembly that, as the English preparations menaced France, the King had ordered fourteen sail of the line to be got ready for sea. He might well hope that the ancient enmity against England would impel the Assembly to support the King, and that the outbreak of loyal and patriotic ardour would impart new life to the government. But the Assembly, without bestowing a thought on the immediate need, took occasion to discuss the principles which should hereafter guide France in her foreign relations. If treaties are acts of sovereign power, and if the people cannot alienate its sovereignty even for a moment, no treaty can be valid unless made with the express consent of the people. Since none of the treaties, by which France was actually bound, had received the express consent of the people, none of them could be binding in itself, although there might be reasons of justice or expediency for acting as though it did bind. Thus France was free to take her own course in foreign affairs, unfettered by previous obligations. Robespierre, Pétion, Barnave, and other orators of the Left, proposed that the nation should solemnly renounce all thought of conquest. When other nations had regained their freedom, they would do the same and wars would cease; for all wars had hitherto arisen out of the ambition of Kings, and no nation would take up arms save in a just cause. Diplomacy and ambassadors were useless; general alliances were out of date; and nothing more was needed than national pacts with just peoples. The National Assembly should itself undertake the negotiation of treaties and exercise the power of war and peace. In vain Mirabeau observed that popular assemblies were as subject to passion as Kings, and not subject to any responsibility like Ministers. In vain he asked whether, because France had suddenly changed her own political system, she would force all other nations to change theirs. In

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vain he urged the madness of disarming before Europe in arms. In vain he annexed all imaginable safeguards to his proposal that the King should still have the power of making war and peace. The King on declaring war was immediately to notify the fact to the legislature, which might call the Ministers to account or refuse the necessary credits, or at any time in the course of the war require the executive to make peace. All treaties with foreign Powers were to be negotiated and signed by the King and approved by the legislature. The Assembly manifested its preference for Barnave's proposal that the legislature should have the power of concluding treaties and making war or peace, and that the King should merely have the right to recommend such a course of action as he thought expedient. The debate aroused a new agitation in Paris, and a fly-sheet entitled *The Treason of the Comte de Mirabeau discovered* was hawked all through the streets. Mirabeau thought it necessary to retreat from his position, and in a second speech two days later accepted an amendment by Le Chapelier, which was in effect the same as Barnave's project, although it expressly reserved to the King the sole initiative of proposals for war or peace. The Assembly added to its decree a declaration that the French people renounced all wars of conquest, and would never employ its forces against the liberty of any other nation.

The Assembly gave a new proof of its resolve to keep foreign affairs in its own immediate charge when it cancelled the permission given by the Ministers to the Comte de Mercy-Argenteau, the Austrian ambassador, for the passage of some Austrian troops from Luxemburg through France to Belgian territory. It then named a Committee of six, including Barnave and Mirabeau, to review all treaties to which France was a party. Meantime the English government continued its pressure upon the King of Spain (Charles IV), and he renewed his appeal for help to his kinsman. Mirabeau prevailed on the Diplomatic Committee to turn the Family Compact into a national compact, at the same time omitting the offensive clauses. On August 26 the Assembly invited the King to equip forty-five sail of the line, and to tender to Spain the revised treaty as the basis of a new alliance. But the Spaniards had not asked the French to conclude a new treaty; they had called for help under an old treaty, which the Assembly had cancelled without asking their leave. Feeling how vain it was to trust an ally of this kind, they preferred to make terms with their enemy, and, by the Treaty of the Escurial, October 12, 1790, they yielded all the points which they had disputed with England. The impotence of the French Crown was now as patent in foreign as in domestic affairs. It may excite some surprise that the Assembly, which acknowledged the nation liable for the King's debts, should have treated the nation as not bound by treaties which the King had concluded. But the majority was impelled, not so much by scruples about the sovereign rights of the nation,

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as by deep jealousy and distrust of the Crown, and by fear lest the emergencies of foreign affairs should enable it to regain somewhat of its power and dignity.

As the basis of the new Constitution, the Assembly decreed a new division of the territory. The old territorial divisions of France, the growth of ages, were in many respects ill suited to the needs of a modern people. Most ancient of all were the dioceses, in part at least dating back to the time when Gaul was embraced in the Roman Empire. Next came the Provinces, formed chiefly in the period of feudal dispersion. They were very unequal in size, most irregular in form, and sometimes interlaced in a highly awkward manner. The Crown had from time to time instituted new modes of division for administrative purposes, governments, *généralités élections*. Lowest came the towns and rural communes, many of them defined in a very remote period. In making a new division the Assembly was prompted partly by the wish to form areas convenient for a new and uniform system of administration and for the election of deputies to the legislature, partly by the wish to extirpate along with the Provinces the last traces of that provincial feeling which had found utterance even in the elections for the States General. Even in 1789 some of the Provinces regarded themselves as united on equal terms with the French monarchy and affected the style of a nation, the Breton, Bearnese, Provençal, or Franc-Comtois nation. According to the scheme settled by the Constitutional Committee, France was to be divided into about eighty Departments, as nearly as might be of the same size, each Department into Districts averaging six or seven, and each District into Cantons averaging eight or nine. The Cantons were made up of municipalities, that is, of the old communes, the only historical divisions preserved, in number upwards of forty thousand.

As the scheme was finally carried out there were eighty-three Departments. In forming them a certain regard was paid to provincial boundaries and provincial sentiments. A small Province sometimes became a Department by itself. A large Province was usually divided into a number of complete Departments; and, only where strong reasons of convenience could be alleged, was a Department formed out of two or more Provinces. Nevertheless there vanished all that was left of old provincial institutions as well as of the old administrative system devised by the Kings of France and their Ministers. The new Departments, Districts, and Cantons, had no history, no associations, no inner life or bond of common feeling, and presented a smooth blank surface upon which the legislator might impress whatever pattern he thought proper. Some writers have blamed the Assembly for thus wasting the force which immemorial local ties and instinctive local patriotism might have given to a new system of self-government. But the Assembly was saturated with the doctrine that *esprit de corps* is the enemy of public spirit, and that the attachment of the citizen to any smaller group conflicts

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with allegiance to the commonwealth. In this matter the Assembly partook far more than it suspected of the jealous temper of the old monarchy and, without knowing it, cleared the field for a new despotism. Englishmen, who know how impossible it would be to blot out the English counties, may wonder at the ease with which the Assembly effected these territorial changes. But it was characteristic of the French Revolution that the people seemed to find a pleasure in renouncing their history, and in destroying even the names and forms which recalled the past.

During these debates France continued to offer the strange sight of a people almost without a government and in the highest tension, sometimes of amiable, sometimes of savage excitement. Characteristic of the time were the so-called "federations" in which the National Guards of neighbouring districts met to swear mutual friendship and obedience to the decrees of the Assembly. These federations began in the south towards the close of 1789. The friends of the Revolution saw their value. The municipality of Paris proposed and the Assembly decreed on June 5, 1790, a general federation of the whole of France, to be consummated on the anniversary of the capture of the Bastille. Deputations from all the National Guards of the Provinces, from all the regiments of the army, and from the fleet, were to assemble on that day in the Champ de Mars, together with the National Guard of Paris, and to swear fidelity to the nation, the law, and the King. As the labourers employed could not finish the earthen amphitheatre in time for the ceremony, people of both sexes and of all ages, ranks, and conditions, came to their help, till, it is said, two hundred thousand men, women, and children were digging and delving. On July 14, in the presence of the King, the Queen, the National Assembly, and an innumerable concourse of spectators, including fourteen thousand representatives of the National Guard and eleven thousand representatives of the army, Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, assisted by two hundred priests in tricolour scarves, celebrated Mass at the altar raised in the midst of the amphitheatre. Lafayette, the hero of the hour, was the first to take the oath. He was followed by the president of the National Assembly and by the King. Then followed the oaths of the deputations. The electric shock of the enormous crowd, the pageant, the strains of military music, and the incessant salutes of artillery wrought up the onlookers to what Ferrières terms "a delicious intoxication." The National Guards from the Provinces showed much good-will to the King personally; but their zeal for the Revolution was refreshed by their visit to its centre. Nor did the fraternal scenes enacted in Paris and other cities and towns hinder the outbreak of passions of a very different nature.

The federations completed the dissolution of the regular forces by bringing them under the direct influence of the revolutionary clubs. The soldiers everywhere chose regimental committees to manage their

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affairs, and sent deputations to their commanders to ask for redress of their grievances, which were often very real. Garrisons sent deputations to each other or to the National Assembly. Sometimes the men went further, put their officers under restraint, helped themselves from the regimental chest, and spent the money in taverns and brothels. This licence nowhere went further than with the garrison of Nancy, consisting of two French regiments and the Swiss regiment of Château-Vieux. When the Marquis de Bouillé, general of the army of the East, had failed in bringing them back to obedience, the National Assembly had interposed and sent an officer of high rank, M. de Malseigne, to carry out its decree. But the soldiers and mob of Nancy set him at defiance and he barely escaped from their hands to Lunéville. There he was seized by another mutinous regiment and handed over to the rebels at Nancy. Bouillé, having mustered a small but faithful body of regular troops and a few National Guards, summoned Nancy on August 31. After some parleying the rebels obeyed and the mutinous regiments began to defile out of the city. But then the armed populace fired on Bouillé's men, who answered by storming the gate; and the mutineers at the sound of the cannon hurried back to help their late allies. After a furious combat of three hours, in which he lost forty officers and four hundred men, Bouillé forced his way into the town and compelled a fresh surrender. The mutiny of Nancy had caused such alarm that not only the King but the National Assembly returned thanks to Bouillé and the troops which had served under him. In accordance with the privilege of the Swiss regiments in the service of France, the Swiss officers sat in judgment upon the mutineers of Château-Vieux. Twenty-two were sentenced to death and some fifty to the galleys. The French regiments were disbanded, but suffered no further penalty. Regimental clubs were forbidden but throve none the less. Danton, Marat, and all who like them desired to prolong anarchy as the means to a more thorough revolution, clamoured against the general, the Minister for War, and the Assembly itself, and at length got an amnesty for the Swiss soldiers condemned to the galleys. Desertion continued to thin the rank and file. The officers emigrated in crowds. Even the firm Bouillé found that he could not trust more than a remnant of his troops, and outside his command there was no more than the shadow of an army.

The navy had fallen into equal disorder. Both the workmen in the royal dockyards and the sailors had their grievances, which they expected the National Assembly to redress, and both were skilfully urged to mutiny by the clubs and the newspapers. So early as November, 1789, the workmen at Toulon broke out into riot because Comte d'Albert de Rions, the director of the port, had forbidden them to wear the tricolour cockade, or to enlist in the National Guard. As the only means of saving his life he was hurried off to prison. The commissioner sent down by the Assembly reported that there was no reason to punish

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anybody. A new director of the port was appointed. At Brest in September, 1790, the sailors mutinied because a drunken man was ordered off the *Patriote* for insulting one of the officers. The popular club at Brest took up the cause of the mutineers. The municipality interfered to protect them. The Assembly sent commissioners to restore discipline, but they availed nothing. Although the mutiny was in part directed against the new penal code for the navy, a committee report ascribed it to the misconduct of the Secretary of the Navy and the delay in adopting the tricolour flag. But the resignation of the Minister and the use of the tricolour did not satisfy the culprits, who forced the Assembly to repeal the unpopular clauses of the penal code and to give formal thanks to the Jacobin club at Brest. There could no longer be any question of discipline in the French navy. Here also the officers emigrated and the men deserted. But here the mischief was not repaired as it was in the army. Neither the Republic nor the Empire could form such a navy as had disputed the command of the sea with England in the American War.

On the colonies the Revolution in France had consequences grave in themselves, but rendered terrible by the perverse handling of the National Assembly. In the French West India Islands the governors were jealous of the Intendants who had charge of the finances; the planters and the merchants stood to each other as the nobles to the *bourgeoisie* at home; the mulattoes were a large and discontented class; and the white population was outnumbered by the negro slaves in the proportion of one to eight. Some representatives of the planters had found seats in the National Assembly, and the events of July had led the colonists, especially in the great island of San Domingo, to set up municipalities and enrol National Guards. An assembly of planters at Leogane went further and claimed for San Domingo the right to give itself a constitution which would only need to be confirmed by the King. But this assembly could not resist the new governor, the Comte de Peynier, and its ring-leaders fled to France in August, 1790. Then the commander of the regular troops at Port-au-Prince, the capital, disarmed the National Guards and imprisoned the colonial committee. Next the mulattoes raised a rebellion to gain the rights of citizenship. They were put down, and their leader, Vincent Ogé, was broken on the wheel. Early in 1791 the arrival from France of some troops tainted with the spirit of mutiny emboldened the mean whites and the colonial troops at Port-au-Prince to rise and make themselves masters of the city. When these events were reported at home the National Assembly, without taking any measure to enforce order, decreed the abolition of slavery and bestowed civic rights on all the inhabitants of the colonies. Six months later the negroes of San Domingo, learning that they were free, took up arms and began the most terrible servile war of modern times, ending in the ruin of the colony. Martinique and Guadeloupe underwent miseries less in

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degree but the same in kind. Even the isles of Bourbon and Mauritius and the French settlements in India were shaken by the disorders of the mother country.

In the beginning of September Necker resigned. Very soon after his return to office in July of 1789 he had lost all popularity and power. The course of events had disproved his pretension to be considered a statesman, and the Assembly neglected to use even his skill as a man of business. Its committees did his work without listening to his advice; and his position, which had long been painful and humiliating, became dangerous after the affair of Nancy. On September 2 his house had to be protected by the National Guard against the mob, which shouted "Down with the Ministers! Death to Bouillé!" The next day he tendered his resignation, which the Assembly accepted without a word of thanks or regret. He returned to his native country, but not without having been twice arrested on the way.

The utter ruin of the ancient institutions of France, the determination of so many of the principles of the new order, and the redivision of the territory, left, as it might seem, no more than the details of the Constitution to be enacted. But the aspect of public affairs, the temper of parties, and the relation of the King to the Assembly, matters of so much consequence when an absolutely new system of government was to be elaborated and brought into working, were all changed for the worse by the attempt of the Assembly to reform or rather remodel the Church of France.

A change in the relations of Church and State, a reduction in the number, wealth, and political power of the clergy, were indeed inevitable. Many of the *cahiers*, we have seen, touched upon these subjects, although they rarely or never raised questions of doctrine or worship. The bulk of the French people were orthodox, if not zealous Catholics; but the Assembly contained a majority, hostile in different degrees as Jansenists, Protestants, or freethinkers, to the existing ecclesiastical order, and impatient to requite all that they had suffered from the intolerance of Rome. It was thus that the Assembly approached the most delicate and difficult part of its task in a harsh and unsympathetic spirit. It did not dissolve the connexion of Church and State, but rendered that connexion intolerable to most of the clergy, even as it had preserved the monarchy whilst making the King's position as humiliating as possible.

The merely political power of the clergy was abated by the union of the three Estates in one assembly, for it was certain that a constitution framed by a majority of laymen would never restore their separate political existence. The night of August 4 witnessed the first inroad upon the wealth of the clergy, inasmuch as the suppression of feudal rights would affect prelates and monasteries as well as lay *seigneurs*, and the suppression of tithes would affect almost all the clergy. But in that feverish sitting it had not been determined what ancient rights should

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be commuted for money and what should be merely cancelled. On several occasions the heads of the Church declared their readiness to make considerable sacrifices, but they always tried to avert the assertion of the principle that the wealth of the Church was the property of the nation, and this principle the majority was resolved to enforce to its uttermost conclusions. First it was decided, against the arguments of Sieyès, that the tithes should be suppressed without any compensation. A sum of at least 70,000,000 *livres*, nearly £3,000,000 a year, was thus divided among the landowners of France in proportion to their wealth; and perhaps two-fifths of all the ecclesiastical revenues were swept away at a single stroke. Meantime disorder had risen to such a height that scarcely any revenue could be collected; and, as nobody would lend to the State, bankruptcy seemed approaching. On October 10, therefore, Talleyrand proposed that the nation should take the Church lands into its possession and sell them in order to pay its debts. Mirabeau moved the Assembly to declare that these lands belonged to the nation, subject to the duty of making a provision for the clergy, and that no *curé* should have less than 1200 *livres* a year as stipend. A law embodying these proposals was voted on November 10; and by a law of December 19 a sale of lands was actually ordered. At the same time the first issue of *assignats* was sanctioned. It is unnecessary here to trace the subsequent measures by which the vast wealth of the French Church was dissipated.

The numbers of the clergy were reduced by the law of February, 1790, which deprived monastic vows of all legal force, leaving the inmates of religious Houses free to return to the world, suppressed the existing religious Orders, and forbade the introduction of any new ones. All the monastic property now became available for secular purposes, but pensions were assigned to the Religious. Those who wished to continue their former way of life were allowed to do so in Houses set apart for the purpose; and the Orders engaged in charity or education, as well as the convents of women, were left undisturbed. Many monks and friars availed themselves of their new liberty, but the nuns generally preferred to remain in their convents. As anarchy grew in France, and political and religious hatreds became more venomous, the condition of those who kept to their vows became most painful. Their pensions were irregularly paid, they were harassed by the municipalities, and threatened, sometimes brutally maltreated, by the mob. All this, however, lay in the future. So tepid was the Catholic feeling of the time, so useless had most of the monasteries become, and so unpopular were most of the religious Orders, that the dissolution called forth little resistance. The Assembly might have acted more wisely in continuing that gradual suppression of decayed communities which the Crown had begun; but so far it had not raised up any formidable religious opposition.

It was the new form imposed upon the relation of the clergy to the State which broke the alliance between the *curés* and the commons, and

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hastened the conflict between the French Revolution and the See of Rome. The majority of the Assembly was imbued with the notion that all independent corporations are evils to society; and its leaders had committed themselves to the principle that the clergy should be regarded as a branch of the public service employed to teach morals and dispense charity. In the Ecclesiastical Committee the prevailing temper was deepened by the influence of the Jansenists, especially of Camus and Treilhard; and the "civil constitution of the clergy" presented on its behalf to the House in May, 1790, was a direct challenge to the feelings and traditions of orthodox Roman Catholics.

By this constitution the ancient ecclesiastical dioceses and provinces were set aside. Henceforward there was to be one Bishop and no more in each Department; and the Metropolitans were reduced to ten. All French citizens were forbidden to recognise the authority of any Bishop or Metropolitan whose see lay outside the kingdom, although by a later amendment a new Bishop was allowed to write to Rome as a testimony of unity of faith and communion with the head of the Church. The cathedral Chapters were suppressed, and to each Bishop was assigned a council of vicars, whose concurrence was needed for every act of jurisdiction. A reduction was also made in the number of parishes. All ecclesiastical offices became elective. The Bishop was to be chosen by the electors of the Department, and the *curé* by the administrative assembly of the District; while no man was to be disabled from voting by the circumstance that he was not a Catholic. Only persons who had been in orders for a time fixed by law were eligible; and when elected they had to undergo examination by the Bishop or Archbishop; but his power of rejecting was severely limited. The stipends of all the clergy were fixed. The Bishop of Paris alone was to receive 50,000 *livres* a year; the rest were to have from 20,000 to 12,000 *livres* according to the size of their diocese. The parish priests were to receive in Paris 6000 *livres*, and elsewhere from 4000 to 1200 *livres*; and the curates from 2400 to 700 *livres*. Residence was enforced by placing the clergy under the control of the local authority. In order to absent himself for more than a fortnight the Bishop must obtain leave from the Directory of the Department, the *curé* from the District Directory.

The advocates of the civil constitution of the clergy maintained that it did not touch doctrine or worship, but merely reformed discipline, and that it did not therefore encroach on freedom of conscience or go beyond the rightful province of the secular authority. The commanding influence in the affairs of the Church, formerly enjoyed by the Crown, might fairly be claimed for the nation. If the King had formerly nominated the Bishops, and the King and other laymen had enjoyed the patronage of many livings, why should not the general body of Frenchmen now exercise the same powers by way of election? The Jansenists,

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who swayed the Ecclesiastical Committee, were apt to magnify the authority of the State in the hope of effecting a reformation of the Church. "A State," said Treilhard, "can admit or exclude a religion; *a fortiori* it can declare that it wishes a particular establishment to exist in a particular place or in this or that manner. When the sovereign believes a reform necessary, no opposition is admissible." But, whatever might be alleged in favour of the civil constitution of the clergy, it did undoubtedly shock the consciences of a great number of Frenchmen. They held the established discipline of the Church to be an essential part of the Catholic religion. They felt that the election of Bishops and parish priests by laymen, who need not even be members of the Church, and the implied denial of papal jurisdiction would involve them in the guilt of schism. Some clerical members of the Assembly proposed the convocation of a national council to reform the Gallican Church and a negotiation with the Pope; but this did not satisfy the majority, who wished to enforce the absolute, unconditional prerogative of the legislature in matters ecclesiastical. Although the Assembly had adopted the principle of freedom of conscience and the principle of a State Church, it forgot in regulating the Church all deference to the scruples of the faithful, and returned unwittingly but surely to despotic precedents and the old contempt for human liberty.

Early in the year the Pope had taken alarm at the ecclesiastical measures of the National Assembly. He could not but condemn the civil constitution of the clergy, which extinguished his authority in France, and he warned Louis that its acceptance would be an act of schism. Louis, with the deepest reluctance, but wholly unable to resist, gave his sanction to the ecclesiastical decrees on August 27. The clergy, already incensed by the confiscation of Church lands and the suppression of the religious Orders, were more stubborn in resistance. Many of the Bishops had protested against the civil constitution; the parish priests condemned it; some outbreaks of violence against the Protestants in the south betrayed the rekindling of fanaticism, and for the first time a popular movement counter to the Revolution became discernible. At Montauban, where the Protestant middle class formed a large part of the National Guard, while the municipality was Catholic, the Catholic mob on May 10 attacked the unarmed National Guards, killed or wounded sixty, and imprisoned the rest until they were set free by a commissioner from the National Assembly. A month later the two religions came to blows in Nîmes; and the Protestants, with the help of the fanatic peasants from the mountains, gained the victory, killing over three hundred Catholics. Then the Catholic priests and nobles of the neighbouring departments planned a "federation" of Catholic parishes for August 18 on the plain of Jalès; upwards of thirty thousand National Guards met there on the appointed day, heard Mass and agreed to petition the Assembly that the Catholics of Nîmes should be allowed

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to arm, that those who had been imprisoned after the faction-fight should be set free, and that those who had suffered in their property should receive compensation. The Assembly denounced the federation of Jalès as unlawful, but its promoters kept banded together.

These warning symptoms only hardened the imperious temper of the National Assembly. On November 26 the Ecclesiastical Committee reported in favour of compelling all beneficed ecclesiastics to swear that they would maintain to the utmost of their power the Constitution decreed by the Assembly and accepted by the King. After a fierce debate, in which Mirabeau outstripped the intolerance of the Ecclesiastical Committee, the proposition was carried. The unhappy King hesitated, tried to gain time, appealed to the Pope; but at length, overborne by the urgent summons of the Assembly and by threats of instant violence against the clergy, if not against himself, he yielded and signed on December 26 the decree which was to bring so many evils upon France. The clerical members of the Assembly were now required to take the oath. On January 4, 1791, the roll was called; and Bishops and priests with grave dignity declined. The majority then retorted with a decree depriving all ecclesiastics who persisted in their refusal. Everything that could be devised to induce the people to maltreat the refractory clergy was done by the popular clubs and newspapers. Yet only four prelates would swear, and they carried little weight; for the Archbishop of Sens and the Bishop of Autun lacked character, and the Bishops of Viviers and Orleans lacked talent. One hundred and twenty-eight prelates and a large proportion of parish priests were deprived for refusing the oath. The election of their successors caused yet more rancour; and the persons chosen, although generally respectable, were not of such commanding merit as to make men forget how they had obtained preferment. Henceforth there were in the Gallican Church two hostile bodies of clergy: the one upheld by all the power of the State and all the violence of the mob; the other supported by whatever was left in France of Catholic zeal and orthodoxy. Bitter religious discord was added to all the other plagues of the time; and the mischief begun by the National Assembly was made irreparable by the Legislative Assembly and the Convention.

The decrees of the Assembly regarding the Church drove the King once more into active, although not open resistance. Since the failure of his attempt to use force in July of 1789, Louis had waited passively upon events. It is impossible that he should have approved of recent changes. Holding himself King by the grace of God, and knowing that he had meant well and made large concessions to the spirit of the time, he must have resented the loss of power and liberty, and he must have discerned in the anarchic and miserable state of France the assured retribution of revolt against lawful authority. Yet so indolent, so irresolute, so honestly averse from civil bloodshed was Louis, that it was

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long before he concerted any measures against the National Assembly. He put no trust in his kinsmen who had emigrated, and he had no hope of aid from without. But the Assembly, in forcing him to approve the civil constitution of the clergy, had made him do what he believed to be wrong, what the Pope had condemned, what might imperil the souls of millions of faithful subjects as well as his own. In forcing him to approve the decree which exacted an oath to that constitution, the Assembly had driven him to take part in persecuting men whom he revered for a resistance believed by him to be a duty. "I would rather be King of Metz than remain King of France in such a position," he observed after signing the decree; "but this shall not last long." Louis could not indeed shake off those weaknesses which made him the most futile of conspirators. Still less could he measure the forces which had issued in the Revolution. To him it seemed that an unscrupulous faction had misled his good people, had all but deposed himself, and had oppressed his clergy and nobles. He meditated escaping from Paris, appealing to the sound part of the nation, and with the help of a display of force by friendly Powers restoring his authority and giving effect to his forgotten declaration of June 23, 1789. With more activity and courage, but with even less judgment, the Queen adopted these plans and looked round for help from abroad. Little was known, but much was suspected by the partisans of the Revolution; and from the autumn of 1790 events moved steadily towards the issue foretold by Mirabeau, the abolition of the monarchy, and the death of the King and Queen.

Mirabeau had strongly dissuaded recourse to foreign Powers, but Mirabeau had lost any little credit he ever possessed with the King by the rancour which he had recently displayed against the clergy. His death on April 4, 1791, made no change in the projects entertained at Court. But none of the foreign Powers was disposed to intervene in French affairs, or to help in ending that paralysis of French power in which all found their own advantage. The King and Queen therefore resolved to accept with seeming good-will whatever measures the Assembly might tender. There was only one submission which, even to gain time, the King would not make. Convinced that the priests who had taken the oath were schismatics, he would not avail himself of their ministrations, but had the chapel of the Tuileries served by recusants. The revolutionary party insisted that he must receive the Sacrament from a "constitutional" parish priest. When Louis tried to evade the difficulty by leaving Paris and spending Easter at St Cloud, the National Guards who were on duty at the Tuileries would not allow his departure. The mob rose in their support; the municipal authority would not interfere; and Lafayette could do nothing. Louis and his family had to return to the Tuileries. Two days later he had to appear in the Assembly and solemnly declare himself in the enjoyment of liberty. Even the phlegmatic Bourbon must have felt the unutterable degradation of that

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moment. Yet such were his embarrassments and so tardy his resolution that two more months were lost in plotting and preparation. On June 20 Louis attempted to fly with his family to Metz and the army of Bouillé, leaving behind him a proclamation in which he rehearsed his griefs and retracted his consent to all the measures which had been tendered to him since the loss of his freedom. On the following day the fugitives were arrested at Varennes, and all hope of aid from the army, or from foreign governments, was extinguished. The Comte de Provence, who had taken another route, and adopted better measures, reached Brussels in safety.

Such was the awe which had long surrounded the royal office in France that the first emotion of the public, on learning the King's flight, was one of fear. The alarm was soon dispelled by the news of his capture; but then the question arose how he should be treated. A few Republicans wished to depose Louis, nor did they lack solid arguments; for what settled quiet could men expect with a King who had in truth to be kept a prisoner, if he were to acquiesce in his place under the Constitution? The main body of the Left, however, were monarchical in their peculiar fashion; they were weary of change and saw that the extreme democrats who would have dealt hardly with the King desired another and a more destructive revolution in which all who had anything to lose would alike suffer. The Assembly was satisfied therefore with decreeing that until the King had accepted the Constitution he should be suspended from his office. In fact he remained a prisoner as before.

The club of the Cordeliers with Danton at their head called not only for the deposition but for the trial of the King. A petition to that effect was laid for signature on the altar of the nation in the Champ de Mars. Two foolish persons whom curiosity led to hide themselves under the steps of the altar were found out and murdered. The National Assembly, hearing that it was to be attacked, ordered Bailly to take measures for the safety of Paris. The municipality then proclaimed martial law, and Bailly and Lafayette went to the Champ de Mars, where Bailly read the proclamation enjoining the crowd to disperse. The crowd replied with stones and a few shots; and the National Guards fired, killing or wounding several persons. A panic ensued and many were trodden under foot in the tumult. Such was the incident which became celebrated as the "massacre of the Champ de Mars," July 17, 1791, for the Jacobins regarded all endeavours of the authorities to put down riot as partaking of murder and treason and afterwards dealt with Bailly accordingly.

Time and experience had brought the leaders of the Left, Barnave, Duport, and the Lameths, to those political opinions which they had combated in Mirabeau. At length they saw like Mirabeau that the Revolution could not be closed until the executive had regained some power. Like Mirabeau they tried to reach this end by coming to terms with the King and restoring so much of his prerogative as would enable

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him to resist further encroachment. Like Mirabeau they were doomed to fail. In order to strengthen themselves against the Crown they had flattered extreme opinions and connived at lawless deeds; and, now that the fanatics and ruffians turned against them, they had no defence save the shadow of an executive power. They could expect no help from the Right who, since the capture of the King, had taken no part in the proceedings of the Assembly. They could not gain the confidence of the King and Queen, who were only the more embittered by the failure of their attempt at flight and merely sought to gain time by playing with the parliamentary leaders. Yet Barnave and Le Chapelier addressed themselves to Malouet as the most reasonable member of the Right; assuring him that they would support any fair amendment of the Constitution, if they could count upon the votes of his friends. Malouet had little hope of satisfying this condition, but he undertook to criticise the Constitution in the *tribune*, so as to give Barnave and Le Chapelier the opportunity of declaring themselves already convinced of the necessity for certain changes. On August 8 therefore Malouet ascended the *tribune* and began a speech to which the House listened so attentively that the Extreme Left grew impatient, and Le Chapelier suddenly moved that he should be no longer heard. Having found that scarcely any of the Right would support Malouet, Le Chapelier and his friends had determined not to bear alone the enmity of the Extreme Left, but to gain favour by silencing the very criticism which they had invited. By some strange fatality every attempt to control the Revolution seemed only to make it more violent.

All hope of restoring vigour to the executive was thus lost; and the faults of the Constitution were only enhanced in revision. The Constitutional Act was finally voted on September 3. Throughout its proceedings the Assembly had claimed a plenary constituent power and denied to the King any voice in determining the Constitution. His acceptance of the Constitution was necessary, not to its validity, but to his continuing to reign. After consulting many of the most eminent deputies, from Maury and Cazalès to Barnave and Duport, Louis bowed himself to unconditional assent. The ceremony of the King's oath to the Constitution took place on September 14 in a solemn sitting of the Assembly. Most of its members believed or hoped that the Revolution had run its course, and that the new order of things was solidly established. They were weary of their long toil, and the people were weary of them. On September 30 the National Assembly came to a close.

The Constitution of 1791 has for its preface the Declaration of Rights, a curious mixture of law, morals, and philosophy. Those clauses of the Declaration which may be termed legal ordain that no man shall be arrested or imprisoned save in the cases and according to the forms prescribed by law; that every man shall be deemed innocent until he has been judged guilty; that no *ex post facto* penalty shall be inflicted; that

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no man shall be troubled for any expression of opinion which does not trouble public safety; and that there shall be freedom of speaking, writing, and printing. Among the philosophical clauses those which assert that all sovereignty resides in the nation, and that every citizen is entitled to concur in person or by his representatives in making laws and imposing taxes, are the most noteworthy; the former as an express contradiction of the ancient absolute monarchy, the latter because contradicted by the terms of the Constitution itself. The Constitution begins with re-enacting the laws which had abolished titles and orders of nobility, the purchasable and hereditary character of public offices, privileges of all kinds, all associations of members of trades or professions, and the binding force of religious vows. It goes on to confirm the new territorial division and municipal organisation, declares marriage a civil contract, and establishes civil registers of births, deaths, and marriages. Only then does it begin to determine the distribution of political power. Although sovereignty is inalienable in the nation, the nation can exercise its powers only by delegating them. The representatives of the nation are the legislature and the King.

The legislature was to consist of a single Chamber; and the number of representatives was fixed at seven hundred and forty-five. These were distributed between the Departments, on the threefold basis of extent, of population, and of the amount paid in direct taxes. Two hundred and forty-seven representatives were apportioned according to territory, two hundred and forty-nine according to population, and as many according to the amount of taxes paid. The indirect method of election was retained. The Primary Assemblies were held in towns and cantons. They were composed of "active citizens," that is to say, men aged twenty-five and paying direct taxes equal to the value of at least three days' labour in that district, inscribed upon the rolls of the municipality and the National Guard, and not engaged in domestic service. They had to take the civic oath of fidelity to the nation, the law, and the King. No man could exercise the rights of an active citizen in more than one place. The Primary Assemblies thus composed were to choose electors in the proportion of one for every hundred active citizens. For the electors a higher qualification was fixed. Besides fulfilling the other conditions of active citizenship, they must be owners or usufructuaries of property assessed to the taxes; if in a town of more than six thousand inhabitants, at the value of at least two hundred days' labour; if elsewhere, at the value of at least one hundred and fifty days' labour. In a town of over six thousand inhabitants the tenant of a house valued at one hundred and fifty days' labour, and elsewhere the tenant of a house valued at one hundred days' labour, were qualified to be electors. So was any farmer or *métayer* whose holding was assessed at four hundred days' labour. The electors chose the members of the legislature, who were only required to satisfy

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the conditions of active citizenship. Persons holding office in the administration or in the Courts of justice might be elected, but had to choose between a seat in the Assembly and their place in the public service. A member of the legislature might be re-elected once; but after his second term two years must elapse before he could again offer himself as a candidate. The King and the servants of the Crown were excluded from any share in determining disputed points relative to the elections. Before taking their seats the representatives had to swear, in the name of the French people, that they would live free or die, and that they would maintain the Constitution.

The legislature was to last two years, and the King had no power to prorogue or to dissolve it. At the end of two years a fresh election followed as of course. It might adjourn itself at discretion, and during the adjournment the King might and in certain junctures must convoke it. A deputy could not be Minister during his term of service or for two years afterwards. But Ministers of the Crown had an entry and a place assigned, might demand a hearing on matters concerned with their respective departments, and might on other occasions be granted a hearing by the House. The legislature had full legislative power, qualified by the King's suspensive veto, which did not extend to financial laws. A Bill was not to pass until it had been read three times with intervals of at least eight days. The legislature had executive authority in so far that its consent was necessary to proclaiming war, and its ratification to treaties of peace, commerce, or alliance; but it was debarred from any exercise of judicial power.

The King was styled "King of the French by the grace of God and the will of the nation." Royalty was to be indivisible and hereditary in the male line of the House of Bourbon, according to the rule of primogeniture. At his accession or, if a minor, when he came of age, he was to take an oath of fidelity to the nation, the law, and the Constitution. His person was to be inviolable and sacred, but he was to vacate his office if he failed to take or if he retracted his oath of fidelity, or if he led a military force against the nation, or did not formally condemn such an enterprise begun by others in his name, or, lastly, if he quitted the kingdom and did not return within a time fixed by the legislature. After vacating or resigning the throne he was to become a simple citizen, liable for unlawful acts committed since he ceased to be King. At a King's accession his private estate was annexed to the national domain, and a Civil List was settled upon him for life. He was allowed a guard not exceeding 1200 foot and 600 horse, and paid out of the Civil List. It was to be recruited either from the regular army or from citizens who had served one year in the National Guard, and its members could obtain no promotion outside their own body. In case of a minority the nearest male relative became Regent if he satisfied certain conditions, and the custody of the King's

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person was entrusted to his mother. Eighteen years was to be the age of majority.

The King was the supreme executive power. As such he was the head of the administration, and the chief of the army and navy; he was charged with the external safety of the kingdom; he named all ambassadors and diplomatic agents; he chose the commanders of fleets and armies, and conferred the rank of marshal or of admiral. In the lower grades he had a more limited patronage. He appointed one-half of the lieutenant-generals, one-third of the colonels and lieutenant-colonels; two-thirds of the vice-admirals, half of the captains, and one-sixth of the naval lieutenants; subject in all cases to such laws as might regulate promotion. He also appointed to the various branches of the civil service. The annual list of pensions and gratifications to be laid before the legislature was drawn up by his command. The King fixed the distribution of the forces by land and sea, conducted negotiations, and signed treaties, subject to ratification by the legislature. Thus the kingly office, though far different to what it had been a few years before, might appear to retain considerable force and dignity. But the restraints upon it were stringent. The King had no control over the duration of the legislature, for the elections took place irrespective of his will and he could neither dissolve nor prorogue. He had no initiative in making laws, although he might invite the legislature to take any subject into consideration. He had, it is true, a suspensive veto upon bills. Should he exercise this veto, the measure could not be brought forward again in that Assembly; but, if it were passed without alteration in the two following, it became law without his consent. The King might not select his Ministers from among the deputies, and therefore the deputies were likely to regard his Ministers as dangerous men, to be suspected and thwarted. The Ministers were deprived of control over the local authorities and the National Guard, and in a great measure of control over the regular army. The King might propose a war to the legislature, but could not undertake one save by its decree. If the case called for immediate action, the King was to inform the legislature of what had been done, and, if it happened not to be sitting, was bound to convoke it at once. Should it disapprove of the recourse to arms, he must arrest the campaign. Not only was the King debarred from any exercise of judicial power, but he could not name the judges, who were to be elective. To these substantial checks upon his power we must add the change of forms intended to impress upon himself and all the world that his position was now a subordinate and a regulated one.

The remodelling of the administrative system ensured the impotence of the sovereign. For, although he had Ministers, he no longer had local agents or representatives. The local authorities founded upon the new subdivision of France were all elective. Each Department had an

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administration of thirty-six persons, chosen for a term of two years by the electors out of such active citizens as paid in direct contributions at least the value of ten days' labour. The administration was renewed by one-half every year. It consisted of a smaller part, the Directory, and a larger part, the Council, of the Department. The Directory, consisting of nine persons, was the executive, and was always in action. The Council, consisting of all the other members, was deliberative, and held its session once a year. In every District the administration was similarly chosen and similarly divided, the whole body consisting of twelve members, four of whom acted as the Directory. Below the District came the Canton, which had no administration, and below the Canton the communes or municipalities. All active citizens here took part in the election, but the conditions of being elected were the same as in the District or Department. As the municipalities varied in population from the smallest village to the largest city, the number of representatives was graduated from three, including the Mayor, where the population was under five hundred, to twenty-one where it exceeded one hundred thousand. These formed the permanent municipal body; but the active citizens also chose notables, who were in each municipality twice as many as the representatives, and who sat with these in the Council General of the commune, summoned only for certain important affairs. The officers of the municipal body were the Mayor, the *Procureur*, and, in the larger communes, the *Procureur substitut*. The executive of the municipal body, known as the *Bureau*, consisted of one-third of the members, always including the Mayor. A special constitution was framed for Paris.

The administration of the Department apportioned its quota of the direct taxes between the Districts; and the administration of the District apportioned its quota of these taxes among the municipalities. The authorities of the Department and the District were also supposed to exercise on behalf of the State a control and surveillance over the municipalities. But, since they were elected in their own neighbourhood, not appointed by the Crown, they were not in any real sense agents of the executive power. Nor had they strength of their own to make their control and surveillance effective. The Department and the District were of comparatively little moment, and all real force was in the municipalities. The municipalities possessed not only the usual powers of local administration, but also certain powers which in every other country have been retained by the State. They might almost be said to inherit the all-pervading authority of the Intendant and his sub-delegates. They had the direction of public works and the management of public property. To them the National Assembly entrusted the Church lands for sale. They made out the roll of tax-payers, assessed the direct taxes, undertook the collection, and forwarded the sum paid to the District and Department, whence it reached the Treasury. The

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municipalities alone could call out the troops, the National Guards, or the *gendarmerie*. The State, having no local representative, could neither collect its revenue nor defend its subjects. Nor had it any effective means of compelling the municipalities to do either. The King might indeed annul the acts of the local authority if contrary to law; he could suspend it if it were obstinate in disobedience. But this was an empty form, since he had no command of physical force, and the judges were elective. Accordingly the municipal authority did as it pleased, paid in the smallest sum it could, wielded its military power with the freedom of a prince, arrested travellers, opened letters, occupied forts, and laid hands on national property at its good pleasure. Thus the revenue shrank to the merest pittance, and the government became more helpless every day. Public order depended on the concurrence of more than forty thousand independent bodies; and the head of the State, virtually imprisoned by the municipal authority of Paris, was an apt symbol of the condition of the whole commonwealth. At the same time the municipalities, having no external support, were commonly helpless against insurrection and had to take their orders from the local club. So extreme a dispersion of power has perhaps never been witnessed in Europe.

The judicial system was entirely renewed in conformity with the doctrines of the sovereignty of the people and the separation of powers. Neither the legislature nor the King had any part in the administration of justice. The judges indeed acted in the King's name, but they were all elected by the people. In each Canton and town one or more *juges de paix* were established. These were chosen by the "active citizens" out of the citizens eligible to the local administrative bodies. They held office for a term of two years and could not be re-elected. In every District there was a civil tribunal of five judges, elected for a term of six years and re-eligible. Only professional lawyers of a certain standing could be appointed. The different District tribunals in the same Department acted mutually as Courts of Appeal to each other. A supreme Court of Cassation, elected by the Departments, was to sit in the same place as the legislature. There were three degrees of criminal jurisdiction. The municipality heard petty police cases; the *juge de paix* and his assessors dealt with what we should term the lighter misdemeanours; and heinous offenders were tried by the Criminal Tribunal of the Department, which consisted of a president and three judges chosen by the electors. A High National Court was created to try persons accused by the legislature of political offences. Its members were chosen, two by the electoral Assembly of each Department. No judge could be deprived of his office unless on conviction of crime. Viewed as a whole, the new system had the merit of bringing justice within the reach of all, but afforded no sufficient guarantee for independence. The judges were numerous; they were poor; they were elective; and they occupied their seats only for a time. None of the ordinary Courts was in a

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position to withstand the stress of public feeling; and no judge could afford to despise popular solicitation or popular threats. He had nothing to fear from the government; but the government could not protect him if he honestly discharged his duty. The adoption of the jury in criminal cases, however excellent in itself, certainly gave no better chance of equity in a time of revolution. But all must approve the grant of counsel to accused persons, the mitigation of criminal punishment, and many other real amendments of criminal law and procedure.

The armed forces of the nation were withdrawn from the King's authority, as far as was compatible with their continued existence. In the regular army the non-commissioned officers, at each vacancy in their number, agreed on a list of names. The captain selected three from the list, and the colonel chose from these. Sub-lieutenants were elected by the officers of the regiment. The lieutenants and captains and two-thirds of the colonels and lieutenant-colonels were appointed by seniority. In the navy the King's power of choice was similarly restrained. Juries partly composed of privates and non-commissioned officers were introduced into the military Courts, thus taking from the commanders their last means of enforcing discipline. Although the Crown had power to distribute and to move the regular troops for the defence of the kingdom, it could not employ them to maintain order within. Over the National Guards the Crown had no control whatever. The Constitution expressly declared that they were not a military corps, or an institution in the State, being simply the general body of citizens under arms. No man could be an "active citizen" unless he were enrolled in the National Guard. All the officers were elected for one year only and not re-eligible until a certain interval had elapsed. Like the other armed forces, the National Guards could act only on the requisition of the municipality, but, since it was they who chose the municipal councillors, this rule put no restraint on their action. Upwards of four millions of men were thus permanently in arms under officers elected by themselves, with no discipline beyond that which they chose to undergo, and answerable to no civil control save that of their own creatures. Anarchy was thus enrolled, armed, made universal and incurable.

The National Assembly ended many gross abuses and proclaimed many sound principles, but failed to endow France with a stable constitution. The blame does not lie altogether with its members. To give a new form to a great kingdom, which had endured for many centuries, was a gigantic undertaking; and yet there was scarcely a single institution in France which did not need to be renovated. More was required than merely to amend and purify, as in England a hundred years earlier, a political system in the main adequate to the wants of the people and rooted in its affections. Even in England it had been

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needful to change the dynasty. In France, moreover, reform had been so long delayed that, when it came, society broke in pieces. With tumult raging all around, a numerous assembly could not attain the quiet and singleness of mind necessary to wise legislation. But whatever the excuses which may be made for the Constituent Assembly, its work was full of flaws. It conceded too much to theory, yet failed to satisfy logic. It preserved some fragments of the old polity, but did not harmonise them with what was new. In its fear of reaction it ensured a new revolution.

All these errors may be traced in its treatment of the King. The institution of hereditary monarchy, if tried by the principles of the *Contrat Social*, must be pronounced absurd and immoral. The force of habit and tradition and the fear of involving France in yet worse confusion at home and abroad caused it to be retained. But it was stripped of all power and usefulness, and abased in a way that stung even the inert Louis. He had no means of winning the confidence of the legislature, for he might not take its chiefs to be his Ministers. He had no means of appealing from the legislature to the country, for he had no right of dissolution. His veto on Bills was merely suspensive; his part in foreign relations was merely subordinate. He was the chief of an administration which would not act, and of an armed force which would not obey. The Assembly might have retorted that the King of England lay under restraints almost as rigorous; but then the English Cabinet more than supplied his place. The Assembly was open to censure, not for refusing to pamper a prince, but for refusing to establish a fit executive. Either the French legislators thought that a weak executive is essential to freedom, or they regarded the King as a disarmed and imprisoned enemy who must be kept impotent. In the one alternative they were assuredly mistaken; in the other they crowned their labours with a fatal self-contradiction.

The Assembly was no happier in the constitution which it gave to its successor. In deference to the teaching of the *Contrat Social* it expressly declared that every citizen has a right to concur in making laws and granting taxes. At the same time it retained the method of indirect election which had been followed in choosing the deputies to the States General. It required a property qualification for the "active citizen" and a higher one for the elector, thus reducing many to the condition of "passive citizens." Inexperienced as the members of the National Assembly were, they could not help seeing that a large part of the population, poor, grossly illiterate, and unused even to the humblest form of political life, were quite unfit to exercise the suffrage. They were not niggardly in bestowing the franchise, for the "active citizens" numbered upwards of four millions, and must have amounted to two-thirds of all the adult males. But, however wise and temperate the restriction, it stood condemned out of their own mouth. Yet it was

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the only safeguard which they would tolerate. For they refused to institute a Second Chamber, and they carefully took from the King all means of influencing the representative body. They did not reflect that, in their eagerness to keep down the power of the executive, they had exposed the legislature to the dictation of the nearest body which possessed physical force, of the municipality, or even of the mob of the capital.

The administrative system established by the Constitution of 1791 was likewise an unhappy blending of the old with the new. The public, weary of the so-called ministerial despotism, the all-absorbing action of the Intendants, the numberless and tedious references to the Council, desired local self-government without knowledge of its limits or conditions. Vague recollections of medieval liberties, an enthusiasm for small republics gained in the course of a classical education, and loose notions of modern federal commonwealths, such as the United States of America, were all that men had to supply the want of experience in the management of local affairs in their own town or district. Even Mirabeau could so far misapprehend the French character as to declare himself convinced "that a great empire cannot be tolerably governed save as a confederation of small states, and that ours will be constituted thus or will be dissolved." These feelings led the Constituent Assembly to abolish all the local organs of the national government, and to set up a purely elective administration. It multiplied elections until they took up a considerable part of the life of an active citizen, and elective councils until, according to one estimate, twelve hundred thousand Frenchmen had a part in managing local affairs. Yet even here we can trace the influence of tradition. In old France, so far as free institutions had extended, the principle that, though deliberation is for many, action is for one, had never been recognised, and much administrative work had been done by comparatively clumsy assemblies. The Constitution, as we have seen, assigned to local administrations much that we should term national business. But for this also there were precedents. The old provincial Estates had taken a large part in the assessment and collection of the royal taxes. The new provincial assemblies set up by Necker and Brienne had like functions. The assessment and collection of the *taille* within the parish had always been left to the inhabitants. It is true that the only argument in favour of such a system had disappeared with absolute monarchy. It is also true that industrious citizens could not afford the time demanded by the new self-administration, and that the new elective bodies came to be filled by professional politicians of the most dangerous kind. Here again the Assembly was biassed by its dread of reaction and its eagerness to disable the Crown and the fallen clergy and nobility. An Englishman may think it strange that legislators so partial to local self-government should have been uniformly hostile to voluntary association. But here the doctrine which the Assembly

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derived from Rousseau, as Rousseau had derived it from Hobbes, blended with the tradition of despotic monarchy. Even a practical man like Mirabeau could say, "Particular societies placed in the general society break the unity of its principles, and the equilibrium of its forces." The number of rich and powerful, but obsolete and useless, corporations in the France of 1789 had contributed to ingrain this prejudice in those who deemed themselves lovers of liberty.

The French might rid themselves of their old institutions, but not of their national character, fashioned by ages of Catholic orthodoxy, absolute kingship, and administrative centralisation. That character was not in accord with the theories of the time or with the new Constitution. The dissolution of public order, the impoverishment of so many citizens, the schism in the Church, the restless intrigues of the emigrants, the distrust felt for the King, were more than enough to ruin a system so weak and ill-contrived. The Assembly itself supplied the only thing needed to ensure failure. On Robespierre's motion it had decreed that its members should be incapable of sitting in the next legislature. All the dear-bought experience of the last two years was thus wantonly cast away, and France was again entrusted to novices in government. The Constitution of 1791 was overthrown within a twelvemonth.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

THE acceptance of the Constitution by the King was welcomed by contemporary France as the term of the Revolution, rather than as an epoch in it. The vast majority of Frenchmen both desired to end the Revolution and took it for granted that the Constitution would end it. All that the men of 1789 had fought for was won; the grievances of the *ancien régime* were removed, and the Constitution secured to France a modified form of that monarchical government to which the majority were sincerely attached. Men were tired both of the drudgery and of the excitement of politics, and desired to return to their civil occupations. Nothing was further from the heart of France than the deposition of Louis or the declaration of a *guerre à outrance* against Europe.

It is necessary to enquire how it came about that, in spite of the wishes of the majority, both these misfortunes occurred. Not least among the causes was the composition of the new Assembly, in which the extremists managed to secure an influence totally out of proportion to their numbers. The Jacobin Club, the only powerful political organisation in France, with headquarters in Paris and numerous affiliated branches, had been for many months battling for this end; and its elaborate organisation and the fear inspired by its violence enabled it to exercise an unforeseen and disastrous influence on the course of the elections; but long before this it had been at work in the Constituent Assembly, and had craftily forced through that body measures calculated to secure for it the mastery in the Legislative. The imposition on all electors of the civic oath had the effect of disfranchising a great number of the more respectable voters; for in the civic was comprised the ecclesiastical oath, which no devout Catholic could accept. If thousands were disfranchised by this measure, millions were kept away from the polls by the wanton and deliberate complication of the electoral machinery, which was all a part of the Jacobin plan. Added to the fact that a certain distaste for politics had already come over men, this over-elaboration of the electoral arrangements kept all busy men — in

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other words, all respectable men — away from the ballot, and handed it over to idlers and vagabonds.

The legal means of influencing the elections being thus exhausted, the Jacobins did not hesitate to exercise illegal influences; and violence and terrorism were let loose upon all moderate citizens. Possessed of the only political organisation in France, they were resolved to keep their monopoly; and the word was given from Paris for an attack on all constitutional associations, both there and in the provinces. The *Réunion des Amis de la Constitution Monarchique*, of which Malouet was the guiding spirit, and which had been formed with the avowed and perfectly legitimate object of counteracting the influence of the Jacobin Club, was forcibly broken up by order of the latter; and similar violence was employed against all such institutions throughout the kingdom. Not only this, but on the opening of the polls France was subjected to a systematic *Jacquerie*; and domiciliary visits, disarmament of "aristocrats," violence, and murder, were the weapons employed to keep — not the nobles and priests — but the respectable *bourgeois* from registering their votes. Sifted by the restrictive decrees of the Constituent Assembly, barred from the polls by the excessive elaboration of the elections, the remnant of the moderate vote was thus driven away by sheer violence.

It was not only on the electors that pernicious influences had been at work, but also on the candidates for election. France had, politically speaking, fallen into a state of apathy; the majority of those leisured classes from which the ranks of politicians are naturally recruited had emigrated; and the middle classes who remained had not, speaking generally, the time, the money, or the taste for politics; while members of the Constituent Assembly were excluded from the Legislative by the decree of May 16, 1791. The better class of citizens were thus trebly deterred from becoming candidates for the Legislative Assembly. The government consequently passed in the period on which we are entering into the hands of a new type of politician — men with ambition but without experience, and with little or no stake in the country. Most of the members elected were, as one would expect under such conditions, barristers or journalists, most of them quite young, and few of any mark or recognised worth.

It is strong testimony to the real feeling of the country that, for all their activity, the Jacobins yet found themselves in a minority when, on October 1, the Legislative Assembly met. It was at first impossible to tell how parties in the new Assembly would arrange themselves; but, of the 745 deputies, while 136 only were enrolled members of the Jacobin Club, 264 were on the books of the *Feuillants*. These numbers, it is true, did not accurately indicate the strength of parties, for many who were not Jacobins sat and voted with the Left of the Assembly, while not a few of the Constitutionalists on the Right tended to drift into

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the Centre, where sat some 400 deputies professing no fixed political opinions.

From the outset the dividing line between the two extreme parties was definite. The Right (or *Feuillants*) was loosely united in favour of constitutional government, though not of the present Constitution without amendment; it was in fact on the question of how the Constitution should be amended that the party split up into hopeless divisions. Nor had they any single leader within the walls of the Assembly to heal these divisions: Ramond, Hua, Jaucourt, Gouvion, Daverhoult, Vaublanc, Pastoret, Mathieu Dumas, and Bigot de Préameneu, all sat on the Right, and all were men of courage and distinction: and yet the Right was not led by any of them, but by Barnave, Duport, and the Lameths from the *Feuillants'* Club — led that is from without.

The Left, who desired the total overthrow of the Constitution and the continuance of the Revolution, was in the meantime united in its policy of destruction. For the present there was no distinction between the Jacobins proper and the Brissotin Jacobins, who were afterwards to split off and form the "Gironde." For the time being the Left was simply Jacobin; and it was not till the early months of 1792, when the question of the war came to the front, that the cleavage between the Brissotins and the "*Enragés*" became apparent.

In the Legislative, the Brissotins far outnumbered their colleagues; and very few notable *Enragés* sat in the Assembly. Of the latter the most prominent were Couthon, an eloquent barrister, who gradually identified himself with the most violent section of the party and became eventually the most faithful satellite of Robespierre, Thuriot, also a barrister and the mouthpiece in the Assembly of Danton, and Chabot, an unfrocked Capuchin. With them sat Bazire, another barrister, and Merlin of Thionville, a man who was afterwards to make his mark in the Convention. But the majority of those who were eventually to lead the Jacobins had no seats in the Legislative; Danton, Robespierre, Marat, to name only the three most prominent, were all excluded; and the leadership of the Left thus fell into the hands of the Brissotins, of whom at that time the most notable were, in the Assembly itself, Brissot, and outside it Madame Roland and Sieyès. Brissot is an extreme example of the type of frothy mediocrity into whose hands the government of France was now to fall. The son of a pastrycook at Chartres, he had adopted journalism as a profession. Having been unsuccessful in a candidature for the States General he was all the more eager to grasp at power on his election to the Legislative; and he was able to use the specious and subterranean knowledge of European politics, which he had picked up during an exile in England, and during his editorship of the *Courrier de l'Europe*, to pose as a great authority on foreign affairs. Thoroughly insincere and self-seeking, he desired the overthrow of the King, not as a matter of principle but as

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a step to power for himself, and the outbreak of war simply as a means to that end. Brissot being chiefly occupied with foreign affairs, it was Madame Roland and Sieyès who directed the internal policy of the party. Ruled by spite, vanity, and love of power, Madame Roland associated herself with the extremists — with Danton and Robespierre, be it observed, as well as with Brissot and Sieyès, purely for the gratification of those passions: she had set her heart on the downfall of the throne, not so much from any political conviction as from the desire to gratify her feminine hatred for Marie-Antoinette, against whom she believed herself to have a personal grudge. It was probably due more to her evil influence than to any other cause that the party, instead of devoting itself to internal legislation, now embarked on a further crusade against the monarchy. Her colleague, the Abbé Sieyès, was also firmly determined on the overthrow of the existing order of things, with which, as it was not of his own designing, he was thoroughly discontented. He seems to have been convinced that such an overthrow was bound to create an opportunity for a man of his genius to dictate a new constitution to France. But there were a number of members of the Brissotin party who quickly outshone the regular leaders. Chief among these was Vergniaud, the greatest orator produced by the Revolution; inferior only to him were Guadet and Gensonné. All these were deputies of the Gironde, and the fact that the name Girondins came to replace that of Brissotins is a proof of the prominence of this section of the party. Amongst the Brissotins sat also men so conspicuous as Isnard, Condorcet, Fauchet, and Valazé.

Between these two opposing parties lay the Centre, in which sat an actual numerical majority of the members. To the youth and inexperience which characterised the whole Assembly was here added an absence of definite policy which made the Centre open to every kind of persuasion or compulsion; and on it the Jacobins brought all their sinister influence to bear.

Their first step in this direction was to persuade the Assembly to open its galleries to the public, and their next to fill them with a noisy mob of their own supporters, drawn easily enough from the slums which surrounded the Tuileries. Terrorised within the Assembly, hustled and insulted at its doors, even the more courageous members of the Right lost heart; and the Centre, at no time courageous, very soon ceased to be able to identify itself with any Moderate measure. It was bad enough when the votes were counted by show of hands; but when the Jacobins had persuaded the Assembly to adopt the "*appel nominal*," and each deputy had to declare his vote aloud, the ordeal became altogether too great for the members of the Centre; and after a time a large number simply abstained from voting out of sheer terror. This *appel nominal* was indeed a powerful factor in the history of the Legislative, making a difference of about 100 votes on a division. Proof of this may be found

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in the result of the elections to the Presidential chair, which continued to be decided by show of hands. The fact that as late as July 23, 1792, the name of a Moderate (Laffon de Ladébat) was carried is a proof that at heart the Assembly remained Moderate to the end.

Such were the phenomena of the Legislative Assembly. It now becomes necessary to pass in review the other members of the body politic; and first the Court. The King and Queen had accepted the Constitution with reluctance. The loss of prerogative was probably welcome to Louis, relieving him as it did of much of the labour and responsibility that was so distasteful to him; but the Civil Constitution of the clergy, to which he had been obliged to swear as well as to the Constitution of 1791, had for the first time, but finally, alienated him from the Revolution; while in the Queen's eyes the altered position of the throne under the new *régime* was an intolerable degradation. The Court therefore accepted the Constitution in the hope and belief that it would soon become unworkable.

It is plain that there was much in common between the attitude of the Court and that of the *Feuillants*. Both desired the amendment of the Constitution, and both the maintenance of the monarchy. But unfortunately the King could not bring himself to co-operate with the *Feuillants*. He reproached them, and more especially he reproached Lafayette, who must now be regarded as a *Feuillant*, with the authorship of the present situation. Louis, seldom able to confide in anyone, was incapable of making use of men in whom he did not confide. He now probably distrusted the *Feuillants* more than the Jacobins, for while he considered the former to be traitorous friends, the enmity of the latter was at least open; and, as in his opinion the Jacobins were all corruptible, they were more to be despised than feared. The Court was thus cut off from the one party that could have helped it; nor was it able to avail itself of the only feasible plan of action. The one preliminary to all schemes for the security and rehabilitation of the monarchy was still the withdrawal of the King and Queen from Paris. Time after time in 1792 Louis' wisest counsellors implored him to take this step, but were unable to prevail upon him. Reluctance to risk another such fiasco as the flight to Varennes was not indeed unnatural, but none the less it was most disastrous. The Court had fallen back on the expedient of a peaceful intervention of the Powers; and for that purpose Marie-Antoinette was urging the Emperor to summon a great Congress, and back it with a display of force. War between the Powers and France she neither desired nor contemplated; while to Leopold and to Europe both war and Congress seemed useless, and even harmful, so long as the King and Queen were prisoners in Paris.

The misfortune was that by entering into negotiations with foreign Powers, even although he contemplated nothing more than an armed

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demonstration, Louis could easily be painted by unscrupulous politicians who desired his downfall as plotting for the restoration of the *ancien régime* and as calling in the armed forces of Europe against his own people. On neither of these charges was he guilty, yet it was easy thus to mistranslate his most impolitic attitude. And these were the two very things which would rouse all the real soul of France to resistance; Frenchmen would never give up their new-found liberties, nor would they ever suffer the invasion of their country, whereas they had no idea of fighting for the downfall of the monarchy, the thought of which was actually distasteful to them, or even for the maintenance of the Constitution of 1791, for which no one greatly cared.

The private advisers of the Court at this time were Barnave, Malouet, Dupont of Nemours, and Mallet du Pan; but to none of them was extended the complete confidence which might have rendered him really serviceable. And, if he would not trust his confidential advisers, still less would the King repose confidence in the Ministers, who indeed were little worthy of it. Delessart, the Minister of the Interior, was a well-intentioned, mediocre person, much hampered by ill-health; Tarbé, the Finance Minister, Duportail, the War Minister, and Duport-du-Tertre, the Minister of Justice, were all absolute nonentities. Montmorin, who continued temporarily at the Foreign Office, was a man of some distinction; and when he resigned, November 27, 1791, the King lost the last of the old Court party, but even Montmorin had never enjoyed his master's complete confidence, and it was this feeling, combined with the fact that the King "would never answer letters," that drove him from office. Before his resignation, however, the Ministry had been considerably strengthened by the accession of Bertrand de Moleville to the Admiralty. Bertrand had been Intendant of Britanny, and brought to his department much of the administrative ability with which so many of the Intendants were endowed: he also brought to the King a perfectly loyal and devoted attachment, and, so far as this can be said of anyone, he enjoyed his master's confidence. The fact that the King and Queen were sorry when he took office because they esteemed him, illustrates both the despairing attitude of the Court, and the unfortunate position in which Ministers were placed by the Constitution. But Bertrand's capacity was that of an intriguer rather than a statesman; and he must share with the King the responsibility for refusing to co-operate with the *Feuillants*, and for thus abandoning the last chance of preserving the monarchy.

After this preliminary survey of the state of affairs at the commencement of the period, we are in a better position to understand the motives and import of the initial measures of the Legislative Assembly. The opening sittings were naturally devoted to matters of procedure and etiquette, but soon the Assembly found itself obliged to consider two administrative questions of great urgency. The crisis in the Island of San

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Domingo first engaged its attention. The decree of liberation (May, 1791) had been followed in September by another, which seemed to threaten revocation, and was the signal for a fresh outbreak of hostilities in the island; and the whites had been attacked with great ferocity and determination. It was obviously the duty of the government to secure safety of life and property by sending a sufficient body of troops. The Ministry would gladly have done so, but was too feeble to take so bold a step in face of the opposition of the Brissotins, who had fostered the rebellion and desired its continuance as a weapon against the executive. The crisis in San Domingo was not without effect at home, for France was dependent on the plantations for sugar, coffee, and cotton. The dearth of these commodities created the first cry for the regulation by government of the prices of necessaries which was soon to become important. Much of the time of the Assembly during its first stage was employed in wrangling over the policy to be adopted in the unhappy island, while the reign of terror and massacre was permitted to continue unchecked.

The other seat of trouble was Avignon. This city and the dependent territory of the Venaissin had, since the fourteenth century, been subject to the Popes. The mild government of their distant ruler had given the inhabitants little cause for grievance, but the agitation of 1789 had spread into this *enclave*. In March, 1789, a food riot had occasioned the establishment of a *garde bourgeoise*; and the fever which spread through France after August 4 occasioned several risings in the later months of 1789, and a "French party" began to manifest activity. In February, 1790, the time-honoured consular government had been overthrown; and in April a new municipal government was formally established, and maintained itself in power in spite of the opposition of the Pope. In June, owing to the manœuvres of the French party, civil strife broke out; and the National Guard of the neighbouring town of Orange intervened. On June 12 the citizens assembled and passed a resolution declaring the union of their country to France, which was communicated to the Constituent Assembly. The influence of Mirabeau was exerted to prevent the recognition of this illegal act; and the question remained long in suspense, while the condition of the city and country grew constantly worse. In April, 1791, an armed force set out from Avignon and laid siege to Carpentras, but was repulsed by the garrison. The Constituent Assembly thereupon sent a Committee to Avignon, which reported in favour of union, and on September 13 the union of Avignon and the Venaissin to France was decreed; but considerable delay ensued before the arrival of armed forces.

Meanwhile, the army of bandits which had gathered on the pretext of supporting the union of Avignon with France had seized the papal castle, a fortress perched on a rock above the Rhone, from which they were able to dominate the entire town, and had proceeded to

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establish a reign of plunder and anarchy. But the Moderates of Avignon were no cowards, and resisted their oppressors; and when Lescuyer, one of the leaders of the anarchical party, began to plunder the *Mont-de-Piété*, they fell upon him and killed him. Determined to avenge their leader and to conceal all trace of their crime before the arrival of the government troops which were daily expected, the bandits, headed by a fierce desperado called Jourdan, descended on the city, and, arresting many of the respectable citizens as "suspects," thrust them into prison and there massacred them, to the number of 110, in cold blood. This atrocious deed took place on October 16 and 17, but it was not till November 9 that government troops entered the unhappy city, which during the interval had been at the mercy of Jourdan and his satellites. Under the protection of the troops the moderate reaction, so long stifled, at once broke out; Jourdan narrowly escaped with his life, and was sent for trial to Paris, where his experience in murder found scope in the following September. Two thousand of the bandits were driven out of Avignon, and the old municipality was reinstated. The question of sending troops to Avignon was much discussed in the Assembly during October; and that body must share with the Ministry the blame of the unpardonable delay in their despatch both before and after the massacres, by which the lives and properties of respectable citizens were placed at the mercy of a gang of murderers. No better proof is needed of the incapacity of the government than the apathy and dilatoriness displayed in these two cases of Avignon and San Domingo.

Having disposed of these matters the Assembly might have been expected to turn its attention to the work of internal legislation. But, with an absolutely cynical indifference to the necessity for such work, it turned aside to decree a series of penal measures against the *émigrés* and the *prêtres non assermentés*. Of these measures those directed against the *émigrés*, although they at the same time contravened a provision of the "rights of man," and also disregarded the political amnesty decreed by the Constituent, had certainly some justification. It is true that the *émigrés* were not sufficiently numerous to carry out the threats of which they were so prodigal. It is also true that their attitude as advocates of the *ancien régime* was bitterly resented both by the King of France, who wrote repeatedly to his brothers remonstrating with them for their extravagant pretensions, and also by the Emperor Leopold, who regarded their policy as likely to frustrate the efforts which the Powers were making for the help of Louis. And it is absurd to suppose that any serious politician can really have regarded the *émigrés* as a menace to France. In number a paltry 4000, their organisation was honeycombed with intrigue, and they attained no cohesion before the outbreak of war. At the same time their fulminations were extremely irritating, and would probably have provoked reprisals from any other Power similarly situated. The idea of reprisals was not indeed a new one; and

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in attacking the *émigrés* the Legislative was only following the example set by the Constituent. The question was raised on October 20, and on November 9 a decree was passed appointing January 1 as the date before which the *émigrés* must return to France, and condemning to death all the Princes and officials who did not then return, as well as all who "took part in seditious meetings." The real object of this decree was to keep the *émigrés* out of France, for they were the most valuable asset the revolutionaries possessed; and it was of the utmost importance to them that the efforts of the King and the Emperor to dissociate themselves from the *émigrés* should not succeed. The decree of November 9 was admirably calculated to have this effect. Louis was a humane man with very strong domestic affections, and it was in the highest degree unlikely that he would sanction a measure which was equivalent to a death sentence on his brothers; but if he placed his veto upon it he laid himself open to the accusation of participating in the designs of the *émigrés* for the restoration of the *ancien régime* and for the initiation of violent royalist reaction. And this is exactly what happened, for on November 12 he vetoed the decree, and in doing so started on the inclined plane of unpopularity which had been prepared for him.

The action of the King in vetoing this and subsequent decrees against the *émigrés* was impolitic if natural. His relations never showed any consideration for him, and by their extravagant pretensions had done much to jeopardise his throne and life; they were, in fact, as he knew, his most dangerous enemies, perfectly callous to his dreadful position, and, indeed, making capital out of it. Had Louis been wise he would have paid these men back in their own coin; and it was sheer folly to sacrifice his slender remnant of popularity to a sentimental scruple.

It now only required energy and rapidity of action to foist the character of traitor on the King. With this object there was passed on November 29 a second decree, directed this time at a still more vulnerable part in his armour — at the non-juring priests. By its provisions all priests who did not take the oath within a week were to be removed from their benefices by the Directories of their respective Departments, and their stipends to be confiscated for the Treasury. In their desire to provoke the King to a second veto, the revolutionaries had thus passed a measure, which was not only barbarous and unwarranted to a far greater degree than its forerunner, but was impolitic also, because it ran counter to the religious feelings of the peasantry of France. It touched the King, however, at his most tender point. He was already conscience-stricken at his share in the Civil Constitution, and on December 19 he placed his veto on the decree. He thus did exactly what his enemies had expected and desired.

Meanwhile, on November 29, a matter of even more serious moment had come up for decision. So long as France was at peace it would be

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impossible to accuse the King of assisting a foreign invasion; France must therefore go to war. Here, in a nutshell, we have the foreign policy of Brissot. It was by his influence that a decree was carried authorising the King to demand the disbandment of the *émigrés* by the Elector of Trier, to fix the amount of compensation for the dispossessed Princes, to rearrange the diplomatic corps, and directing him to mass troops on the frontier to support his demands. Such a decree would practically commit the country to war; and the wisest of the King's private advisers implored him not to consent to it. Unfortunately circumstances had combined to unite, although from very different motives, a majority of all parties in favour of war. Brissot, as we know, advocated war as the simplest means of overthrowing the King; but there was a party which desired it from the very opposite reason — for the rehabilitation of the monarchy. Of this party the guiding spirit was Lafayette, who, having resigned the command of the National Guard (October 8), and having been defeated for the post of Mayor by Pétion (November 14), had been appointed at the end of December to the command of the Army of the Centre. He was determined to use his position to effect the rehabilitation of the monarchy under his own protection by means of a brief and glorious war. Lafayette's opinion had the greatest weight with the Moderates in the Assembly; and so it came about that, when he declared for war, the decree of November 29 was carried with practical unanimity. One party alone shared the anxiety of the Court to avoid hostilities — the extreme Jacobins; because they feared that a war, if successful, would only strengthen the executive. It was then that the cleavage between them and the Brissotins began to show itself. The Court, however, in view of the practical unanimity of the Assembly, decided that it was useless to resist; and the first steps on the road to war were taken. Duportail, who was pledged to peace, thereupon resigned, and was replaced at the War Office by Narbonne. By December 14 Louis was able to announce to the Assembly that the decree had been executed, and an army of 150,000 men ordered to the frontiers. It was with feelings of despair that the King and Queen found themselves thus drifting into war: the monarchy was now in their opinion manifestly doomed. War having once broken out, Louis would be in the impossible position of a King conducting a campaign in which he himself was forced to sympathise with the enemies of his country, for with the policy of a restoration by the help of Lafayette and Narbonne he would have nothing to do.

Louis, Comte de Narbonne, was a man of brilliant but somewhat unsteady talents. Almost certainly a grandson of Louis XV, he was by accident of birth and almost of necessity an adventurer; so at least he seems to have struck contemporaries. It was by the influence of Lafayette, Talleyrand, and Madame de Staël that he entered the Ministry; and the policy which he introduced may be regarded as their attempt

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to end the Revolution. The plan comprised the amendment and strengthening of the Constitution, and this of necessity involved some rehabilitation of the Royal prerogative; it was to be effected by means of a European war, which could easily be provoked by an attack on Clement Wenceslas, the Elector of Trier, and through him on the Empire. Diplomacy and their own interests would hold back the other Powers, Prussia in particular. Louis XVI, under Lafayette's guidance, would lead his army to victory, and in a short time the new *régime* would be established amidst a blaze of military glory, a fair share of which would in the nature of things accrue to the victorious general and the successful War Minister. It was an attractive scheme; and, as Sorel has well pointed out, it was in its essentials the very policy which triumphed in 1799 and again in 1814; but the time was not yet.

Narbonne's policy threw him into alliance with the Brissotins. They welcomed him as a fomenter of war, and used him as such only to throw him over by converting the war, which he aimed at the Elector of Trier and the Empire alone, into a crusade against Europe; so that the monarchy was ultimately felled by the very weapon that was to have restored it. His schemes also brought him into opposition to Bertrand and the majority of his colleagues; and to his haughtiness and inability to combine with them may be traced the ruin of the *Feuillant* Ministry and with it that of Narbonne himself.

On his entry into the Ministry his energies were at once directed to the acceleration of the warlike preparations. He demanded a grant of 20,000,000 *livres* and started in the middle of December on a personal inspection of the army.

Meanwhile the Assembly continued its legislation against the *émigrés*. On January 1, 1792, the Princes and Calonne were "decreed accused" of high treason; and on February 9 a decree was passed confiscating all the property of the *émigrés*. This last was in the main a financial expedient, for by this time the position of the Treasury was exceedingly critical. Taxes had almost ceased to be paid: there had been a deficit in the revenue for the four months ending November 30, amounting to a quarter of the estimated income; assignats had depreciated at least 40 per cent.; yet here was the War Minister demanding a grant of 20,000,000 *livres* in specie: the confiscation of the goods of the *émigrés*, which handed over to the government property of considerably greater value than the confiscated *biens du clergé*, was thus a most welcome windfall. The object of the measure was no doubt largely fiscal; but it was also a reply to the announcement by the Emperor that he would support the Elector of Trier, which had been communicated to the Assembly on the previous day. On January 25 an imperious note was addressed to the Emperor, demanding an explanation of his attitude. On March 1 Kaunitz' reply was read: it contained an

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attack on the Jacobins and was, in fact, an insolent interference in the internal affairs of France. The task of reading the note fell to Delessart. He had always been an advocate of peace, and it was said that he read it with undue emphasis. This fanned the suspicion that the Court or the Ministry had prompted it; and from that moment the outcry against the Ministry came to a head.

Meanwhile within that body the original dissensions had been widening. Bertrand stood aloof from the other Ministers as an out-and-out King's man; directing the affairs of his department with consistent ability, adopting a brusque and haughty attitude towards the Assembly, and devoting his spare time to widespread if somewhat ineffective bribery. He adopted the attitude of the Court with regard to the war, and opposed it with all the means in his power. Of the other Ministers, Delessart and Tarbé desired the rehabilitation of the monarchy and the amendment of the Constitution, but above all desired to avoid war. The same desire in a less degree governed Duport-du-Tertre, the *Garde des sceaux*, and Cahier de Gerville, who had succeeded Delessart as Minister of the Interior, when Delessart replaced Montmorin at the Foreign Office (November 30). Duport and Cahier represented the views of Barnave and the Lameths, and were the orthodox *Feuillants* of the Ministry. Narbonne, as we have seen, desired the same object, but proposed to adopt totally different methods; for, while the *Feuillants* proper, reverting to the plans of Mirabeau, advocated the removal of the Court to some provincial town and the dissolution of the Assembly by means of agitation in the Departments, Narbonne and his friends did not scruple to make use of the majority in the Assembly to bring on the war by which they hoped to restore the prestige of the monarchy.

But the escape of the King from Paris was an item in Narbonne's plan, as it was and had been in every plan of the friends of the monarchy, before or after. The idea was that the royal family should escape in Madame de Staël's carriage and take refuge in Lafayette's camp, when the general would at once take steps to restore the monarchy as the centre of the military pride of France. But the whole scheme was rash and ill-judged. Narbonne's colleagues opposed it, while the Queen merely laughed at it. Exasperated by this failure, Lafayette now returned to Paris determined to purge the Ministry of the *Feuillants*; and on March 3 he informed the Ministers that Narbonne could no longer serve with Bertrand. But if Narbonne and Lafayette were determined to get rid of the *Feuillants*, the *Feuillants* were no less determined to get rid of Narbonne, and they had the advantage of possessing the ear of the King. Narbonne now made a deliberate attempt to use military influence to gain his own political ends. He published in the press letters to himself from the three commanders-in-chief at the front, Lafayette, Rochambeau, and Luckner, in which they deplored the prospect of his resignation. The only effect of this indiscretion was to provoke the

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King to dismiss its author; and on March 10 Narbonne was superseded by the Chevalier de Grave.

It was a most unfortunate moment for a ministerial crisis. The course of events during the early days of March seemed to betoken a change in the attitude of some of the Powers: Spain and Prussia seemed to be falling away from Austria, and on March 9 came the bewildering and wholly unexpected news of the Emperor Leopold's death. The maintenance of peace now seemed certain and the funds rose 16 per cent.; but this prospect only roused Brissot and the war party, who saw the cup slipping from their lips, to fresh paroxysms of warlike fury. On the 10th Brissot and Vergniaud fell furiously upon Delessart, accusing him of treasonable relations with Austria. On the same day his impeachment was decreed by a huge majority; and that very night he was arrested and sent to Orleans. Narbonne's dismissal was now condemned in the Assembly as an act of treachery on the part of the Court. The regrets of the Assembly were voted, and in face of the outcry against them the other Ministers resigned (March 10–20).

The crisis which had thus arisen placed the Court in a lamentable dilemma. The *Feuillants*, so far from profiting by the dismissal of their colleague, had fallen with him; so that, while the Court was in violent opposition to both Lafayette and the Jacobins, all hope of effective support from the *Feuillants* was removed. The Palace was for the moment unprotected, pending the installation of the *Garde Constitutionnelle*, which did not take place till March 16. The National Guard favoured Lafayette, and the armed mob was whole-hearted for the Jacobins; Vergniaud in his speech of the 16th against Delessart had breathed ill-veiled threats against the Queen herself. It is not to be wondered at that the King now "behaved like a man preparing for death." On March 24 he decided to summon a Ministry from among the Brissotins. The motives which impelled him to this step have often been discussed. It is probable that he was influenced solely by the terror which the situation inspired, deserted as he was by everyone and with the terrible threats of Vergniaud ringing in his ears. It is possible, however, that he was influenced by some of his private advisers who were advocates of the English Constitution, or that he yielded to the dictation of a Central Committee of Twelve, which had been appointed by the Assembly to guide matters during the ministerial crisis. De Grave, who, though he had been appointed by Delessart, was closely connected with the Brissotins, remained at the War Office. Duranton became *Garde des sceaux*, Clavière took the Finances, Roland, who was entirely in the hands of his wife, the Interior, Dumouriez the Foreign Office, and Lacoste, a nominee of Dumouriez, the Admiralty. The new combination was wholly Jacobin in tone. Had he chosen Robespierre and Danton, the King could not have chosen (with the one exception of Dumouriez) men more hostile to himself or more anxious for his

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downfall. Of the new ministers Roland was a vain and narrow-minded pedant, who was constantly boasting of his own virtue and courage. He was ill-equipped for his important office and brought to it the qualities of a clerk rather than a statesman; and the chief importance of his appointment was the power which it gave to his wife. Clavière had been a *protégé* of Mirabeau and to him belonged the doubtful honour of having invented assignats. But by far the most important member of the ministry was Dumouriez. The exclusion of members of the Assembly from office tended to throw the portfolios into the hands of clever adventurers: thus from the adventurer Narbonne the leadership of the Cabinet passed to the adventurer Dumouriez.

Charles-François Dumouriez was born in 1739 and had served in the Seven Years' War. After this he had entered the service of Choiseul and had taken part in various secret missions, in the course of which he visited many European countries and obtained an extensive personal knowledge of the lower channels of diplomacy. Passing under the influence of Favier, he had next found congenial employment in the secret diplomacy of Louis XV. His intrigues in Poland in 1771 and 1772 led to a two years' incarceration in the Bastille. On his release he had become Commandant at Cherbourg. Though fifty years of age when the Revolution broke out, he was young enough in spirit to welcome it as a field for his versatile talents and to greet it as the opening of his career. In 1790 he was sent on a mission to Belgium. It was there that his restless ingenuity seized on the idea of uniting that country to France, which now became the basis of his ministerial policy. His wide if not exalted experience, his keen political vision, his marvellous genius for expedients, and his natural talent for intrigue, marked him out — especially in his own eyes — as the man to guide France in the impending crisis. But he lacked statesmanship and character, and above all that rare quality by which statesmen gauge the drift of popular feeling. He had determined upon war; it was as necessary for his career as it had been for Narbonne's; but, like Narbonne, he did not contemplate a war with Europe; on the contrary he intended to isolate Austria by winning over England, Prussia, and the States of the Empire, to the side of France. It is impossible not to admire the penetrating vision, the clear-cut plans, and the acuteness and energy with which he set about his task. War, however, as he planned it, was a political expedient, by no means a crusade; and it was a crusade upon which France was now embarking. Dumouriez' ingenuity was at fault when he found himself playing with living chessmen; for now, convinced that they were confronted with a great conspiracy for the re-establishment of the *ancien régime* — the *émigrés* had taken care to leave no doubt of this and the Brissotins had encouraged the idea — the people of France rose as no other European nation had ever before risen, and upset the designs of their enemies together with the calculations of the Minister.

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But in truth neither King, Ministers, nor Assembly had much option in the matter of peace and war after the decree of January 25. A few acrimonious notes between the two governments, a great debate in the Assembly, and war was finally declared on April 20.

We must now leave the administration and the Assembly to survey the internal affairs of the kingdom. The disturbances at Avignon, which have already been noticed, were only an extreme example of what was taking place in many other parts of France. Discontent and reaction in the provinces were fomented by three principal causes. Firstly, the continued depreciation of the assignats and the disappearance of specie had dislocated all trade, and had roused a great outcry against "usurers," as those merchants were termed who refused to receive payment in paper. Secondly, the want of bread, and, above all, the fear of approaching want, had made the poorer classes nervous and excitable; and in spite of the abundance of work and the high rate of wages, in some towns every market-day was the occasion of a bread riot. It was in such a riot on March 3 that Simoneau, the Mayor of Étampes, lost his life in consequence of his courageous refusal to grant the tariff of fixed prices demanded by the rioters. Thirdly, the persecution of the non-juring priests added to these economic causes of disturbance the even more dangerous element of religious dissension.

In Paris also the signs of anarchy were on the increase; and the composition of the various bodies, which were responsible for the administration of the city, encouraged rather than restrained the forces of disorder. The Commune, whose functions had not been interfered with by the Constitution, continued to superintend the food supply of Paris, and had now the additional duty of negotiating the sale of Church property within the limits of the capital. In November a considerable change was effected in its *personnel*. Bailly having resigned the office of Mayor, a contest for that post took place between Lafayette and Pétion, resulting on November 14 in the election of the latter. Two points concerning this election are remarkable — first, that only 10,300 electors recorded their votes; secondly, that the Court, still cherishing their pique against Lafayette, supported the Jacobin candidate. Pétion, who now became the most prominent man in Paris, was both stupid and malicious; and in the elevated position he now occupied his stupidity was as dangerous as his malice. He was another specimen of the Brissotin type, vain and "virtuous," the vanity obvious, but the "virtue" questionable. No more undesirable head could have been found for the municipality, and to his ineptitude and malevolence may be traced many of the troubles of the summer of 1792. In January, when one-half of the Commune had to be renewed, the democratisation of its officials was completed by the election of Manuel, a furious Jacobin, to the position of *Procureur Général Syndic*, and of Danton to that of *Procureur Substitut*. At the same time Sergent and Panis,

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two of the most desperate characters in Paris, obtained seats; and on March 10, by the opening of its galleries to the public, the Commune came directly under the influence of the mob. It is plain that it was impossible to rely on a body such as this, working under such conditions, for the maintenance of order.

But, if the attitude of the Commune was increasingly favourable to disorder, that of the departmental authority must be reckoned as wholly and sincerely on the side of order. The Department of the Seine was organised in the same way as the other Departments of France; its *Conseil Général* numbered 36 members, but they only sat during one month of the year, and the real work was done by a committee of eight, known as the *Directoire* of the Department, presided over by the Duc de La Rochefoucauld. Nominally the Department was the highest authority in Paris; it even had supervisory functions over the Commune itself; but these functions were so ill-defined, and the means of exercising them so inadequate, that the *Directoire*, though governed by the best intentions, was practically powerless.

Such being the condition of the bodies to whom the government of Paris was entrusted, it is not surprising that anarchy and mob-rule began to lift their heads. The outcry against usurers and *accapareurs* — the name applied to any who laid up a store of bread or other necessaries — was made the excuse for arming the proletariate; and during November and December many thousands of pikes were manufactured and served out to the lower classes. The wearing of the red cap of Liberty, a custom the origin of which is somewhat obscure, became so popular also that Dumouriez thought fit to don this head-gear in the Jacobin Club a few days after his entry into the Ministry. But the culminating sign of the trend towards lawlessness was the *fête* held on April 15 in honour of the convicts of the Swiss *regiment de Château-Vieux*. These men, it will be remembered, had been sent to the galleys for insubordination. The Swiss government, on being consulted as to whether or no they should be included in the general amnesty of the Constitution, begged that the convicts might not be liberated; and, on December 22, 1791, the Assembly had actually refused to extend any pardon to them. It is a striking indication of the increase in the forces of anarchy, which marked the early months of 1792, that the very men whose guilt was acknowledged by the Assembly in December were awarded a public reception in the following April. It was Collot d'Herbois, a retired actor, to whose histrionic taste the absurd theatrical staging of the *fête* appealed, who took up the cause of the Swiss, personally conducted them to Paris, and introduced them to the Assembly (April 12). Not content with the admission of the Swiss to the honours of the *Séance*, which was the greatest compliment the Assembly could bestow, their patrons proceeded to organise a public *fête* in their honour. The Commune, guided by Pétion, sanctioned the plan; and the opposition

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of the Department was overcome by the dedication of the *fête* to Liberty. Thus on April 15 was celebrated, in honour of these liberated convicts, the first of the many revolutionary *fêtes*. An attempt was made by the *Feuillants'* Club to organise an opposition *fête*, dedicated to *la Loi*, in honour of the heroic Mayor of Étampes. Although strenuously opposed by Robespierre, it was decreed on May 6 and took place on June 1. But the *Feuillants* did not command the rascaldom of Paris; the idea had lost its novelty, and the *Fête de la Loi* was a dismal failure.

Meanwhile divisions in the Brissotin Ministry had become apparent. Dumouriez, whose masterful spirit dominated it, was not a Brissotin at all; nor had he the slightest desire to establish that party in power at the expense of the King. He was, in fact, only content to sit in the same Cabinet with his colleagues because they favoured his war policy. To them, however, this policy was merely a means of overthrowing the King; and now, in the month of May, with a view to this overthrow they endeavoured to increase Louis' unpopularity by provoking him to further vetoes. In the first place they redoubled their blows at the *prêtres non assermentés*. Secondly, on May 29, almost before it had been installed, they proposed the abolition of the King's constitutional guard; and thirdly, on June 4, Servan, who had succeeded de Grave as War Minister on May 9, proposed the formation of a camp of 20,000 *fédérés* beneath the walls of Paris, ostensibly to train these men for active service, but in reality as a support for insurrection and a standing threat to the Moderates of the city.

It was characteristic of Louis' unselfish but stupid nature that of these proposals he accepted that which was most directly dangerous to himself — the abolition of the body-guard — and placed his veto on the other two: upon the legislation against the priests, because it was a matter of conscience, and upon the decree for the camp, because of a great petition of 8000 citizens protesting against it. On this a ministerial crisis immediately arose; Roland, acting under the influence of his wife, presumed to lecture the King; and Dumouriez, who was not in sympathy with his colleagues, was glad enough to advise Louis to dismiss them (June 12), and to entrust him with the reconstruction of the Ministry. This rebuff to their vanity was more than the Brissotins could bear, and from the moment of their dismissal they plotted immediate insurrection.

The King was now in the hands of Dumouriez, who moved to the War Office. The Minister, to whom the vetoed decrees were in nowise distasteful provided they seemed likely to further his own schemes, now desired his Majesty, in return for his services during the crisis, to withdraw the vetoes. He afterwards, in his *Mémoires*, asserted that Louis had promised to do so and then went back on his word; this was no doubt false. Dumouriez probably expected to persuade the King of

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the necessity of sanctioning the decrees; and it was the disappointment of this expectation that led him to resign on June 15, when he took over the command of the Army of the North. A new Ministry took office drawn from among the friends of Lafayette; none of them, with the possible exception of Terrier de Monciel, Minister of the Interior, being of any note or capacity.

Up to the fall of their Ministry the Brissotins had only vaguely thought of insurrection. They now threw themselves into it as heartily as the most violent of their Jacobin colleagues. Already in the early days of June a knot of conspirators had begun to meet; but, insurrection being still a somewhat uncertain business even in Paris, the more prominent politicians abstained from direct participation. Danton, it is true, seems to have been consulted on every point, but the real work of organisation was done by Santerre, Saint-Huruge (expert in insurrections), Alexandre, Fournier (afterwards notorious as the butcher of Versailles), Rossignol, Legendre, and Lazowski, a Polish refugee. Assured of the co-operation of the Brissotins, the insurrectionaries now applied to the Commune for leave for an armed deputation to plant a "*mai*" in the Tuileries Gardens on the 20th. This request placed Pétion in a dilemma; as a politician he favoured the insurrection, but its success being doubtful he was unwilling to compromise himself in his capacity as Mayor by any appearance of supporting it; he therefore absented himself from the meeting of the *Conseil Général* of the Commune, which, in reply to the deputation, pointed out the illegality of armed processions. The *Directoire* of the Department, which, as we have seen, was a superior authority to the Commune, now intervened with energetic exhortations to the latter to see to the preservation of order, but both the Assembly and the Commune ignored this interference. In spite of much wavering and vacillation on the part of the time-serving Mayor, the preparations for the procession were proceeded with, and on the morning of the appointed day two great crowds were organised, one on the Place de la Bastille and one on the Place de la Salpêtrière, which united under the leadership of Santerre, and, arriving at the *manège* at about 1.30 p.m., presented their demand for admittance.

Meanwhile the Assembly was debating on the attitude it should adopt. Vergniaud, while deprecating the introduction of armed petitions, maintained that it was too late to stop this one. While the debate was in progress the petitioners were clamouring at the doors of the Assembly; and, after a long wait, during which the *mai* (a large poplar) was incongruously planted in the adjoining garden of the Capuchins, they were at length admitted to the Assembly, where their petition was read, and through which they slowly filed.

On emerging from the Assembly the crowd was introduced by the organisers of the revolt into the garden of the Tuileries, probably with the idea of attacking the palace on that its most vulnerable side; but

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the presence of ten battalions of National Guards lining the garden terrace decided the ringleaders on an alteration of their plan of attack, and they led the crowd round the palace by way of the quays and through the Guichet de Marigny into the Place du Carrousel, where the artillery of the battalion *Val-de-Grâce*, which had marched with the insurgents, had been left in the morning. The square, which was not very large and was much encumbered with buildings, was very soon blocked with people, but there was no spontaneous attempt to break into the palace: at no time indeed during the day did the crowd betray any consciousness of the purpose for which it had been brought to the Tuileries. The crush, however, soon became unbearable, and the ringleaders used it as a pretext for demanding entrance to the court-yard of the palace through the Porte Royal, against which the crowd was now pressing. For a time the *gendarmerie* declined to consider this request, but they seem to have been without definite orders; and Ramainvilliers, the commander, was paralysed by the presence in the palace of municipal authorities, who went about in their official garb, lecturing the soldiers and giving contradictory instructions. The *canonniers* of the battalion *Val-de-Grâce*, instructed probably by the promoters of the insurrection, now brought forward their artillery; and, in face of this display of force, the gates were thrown open, and the crowd rushed into the Tuileries. The King, surrounded by a few faithful attendants and personal friends, met the intruders in the Œil-de-Bœuf.

Confronted by a most grave and terrible ordeal, Louis behaved with the utmost courage and *sang-froid*. Withdrawing into an embrasure, he bore for some hours the insults and threats of his tormentors with admirable coolness and phlegm; twice he invited one of his protectors to feel whether his heart was not beating calmly; and, although he consented to place a red cap on his head, to drink the health of the nation, and to wave a sword round his head, he betrayed no weakness in the matter of the vetoes and made no promises to the crowd.

After this state of affairs had lasted a considerable time with no further result, it began to occur to the authorities that the insurrection was hanging fire, and that if, as now seemed likely, it was to end in failure, they had better pose as the champions of order. The first to arrive were some of the deputies, including Vergniaud and Isnard; but their efforts to persuade the mob to leave the Œil-de-Bœuf were unavailing. About 6 p.m. Pétion, who had given no sign since 11 a.m., forced his way into the King's presence, and at length, though not without great difficulty, persuaded the rioters to withdraw; so that at about 8 p.m. the King was able to leave the hall and rejoin the Queen, who had been undergoing similar treatment in another apartment. Thus ended the insurrection of June 20. That it had been deliberately planned there can be no doubt; its direct object had been to terrorise the King into the withdrawal of the vetoes; but its promoters must also

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have contemplated the possibility of his assassination. Neither of these objects had been gained; the King had been cool enough to refrain from any promises about the vetoes, and had been saved by his own calmness and the fidelity of his few protectors from the danger of assassination. Yet the events of the day had not been without profit for the insurrectionaries. The violation of the Assembly and the Tuileries had been effected; and time and further organisation would accomplish their ends. From this date the eyes of all parties were opened to the realities of the situation; and the ensuing fifty days were given up to preparations on both sides for the final struggle.

On June 22 the King made a dignified protest to the Assembly, and on the following day a proclamation to his people. The result was a strong reaction in his favour. Addresses of sympathy poured in from the Provinces. Some of the Sections of Paris dissociated themselves from the insurrectionaries. In the Commune itself men complained of the conduct of the Mayor. Finally, on July 1, a great petition, backed by nearly 20,000 signatures, condemning the attitude of the Commune and the behaviour of the *Commandant Général* of the National Guard, was presented to the King. In addition to this general expression of sympathy, definite aid seemed likely to come from two quarters. The Directors of the Department, the ambiguity of whose position had alone prevented them from averting the catastrophe, now set themselves to stave off a second crisis. They summoned Ramainvilliers to explain his inaction, instituted an enquiry into the events of June 20, and approached Pétion with a view to the appointment of a new *Commandant Général*. The enquiry was prolonged until July 7 and resulted in the suspension by the Department of Pétion and Manuel. It so happened that July 7 had been marked by a melodramatic scene of pacification in the Assembly. Upon the suggestion of Lamourette all the deputies had effusively fraternised; and, to seal the reconciliation, the King had been sent for and received with cries of "*Vive le Roi.*" The atmosphere being charged with pacification, the King decided to refer the Department's decree of suspension to the Assembly. When they ungraciously declined to have anything to do with the matter, Louis was obliged to confirm the decree, for to have vetoed it would have been to encourage a repetition of June 20. The decree, however, was quashed by the Assembly on July 13; and Pétion and Manuel were reinstated. This was a signal defeat for the Department, whose members now one by one resigned: and from this time forward it ceased to be a force in Paris.

Meanwhile, however, succour seemed to be forthcoming from another source. Even before June 20 Lafayette had written protesting against the violence of the Jacobins and demanding the closing of their club. The news of the insurrection therefore came as a personal affront; and he determined to go to Paris and use his influence to destroy the faction. Everything seemed to point to the success of the enterprise. Lafayette

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came with the prestige of a famous soldier; he was still dear to the National Guard which controlled Paris; the Ministers were his nominees; the majority in the Assembly was in sympathy with him, and, what was even more important, was ready to give expression to that sympathy by its votes. He was open, however, to the reproach of deserting his army in the presence of the enemy. This accusation, though not literally true, as his army was not in touch with the Austrians, was made the most of by his enemies; and the shafts of Guadet's caustic eloquence were quickly directed against this weak point in his armour, when on June 28 the general presented himself at the bar. But Lafayette seems to have had a curious power of inspiring the timid Moderates with courage; and Guadet's proposals, that the War Minister be asked if he had permitted the general to leave his army and that the Committee of Twelve report on the right of generals to petition, were rejected by 339 votes to 234. More fatal than the charge of desertion was the fact that his assistance was utterly distasteful to those to whom it was proffered. It is not indeed extraordinary that the Court looked askance on Lafayette, since many of their troubles could be traced to him; but it was more than unfortunate that at this critical juncture the King and Queen were unable to swallow their resentment and make use, if it were only for a time, of the one man who might have saved them. But it was not in their nature to do so. Lafayette was received with chilly politeness; and it was the Queen herself who warned Pétion of a review of National Guards, at which the general hoped to win over the armed force for a blow at the Jacobins. Thus the contemplated *coup d'état* was wrecked by those whom it had been destined to benefit; no advantage had been taken of the Moderates' victory in the Assembly, and the Court had rejected the advances of the general. With his departure on June 30, and the revelation of his impotence, the forces of anarchy and disorder emerged from their dens. The tide turned finally in favour of the insurrectionaries.

The arrival in Paris of the armed bands, which had been summoned ostensibly to celebrate the feast of the Federation on July 14, was a considerable reinforcement for the conspirators. The Constitutional Guard having been disbanded and the loyalty of the National Guard being at best doubtful, it was obvious that the attitude of these "*fédérés*" would be of the first importance. Every effort was therefore made by the insurrectionaries, and especially by Barbaroux and the Rolands, to introduce a large body of desperadoes into the city, and by the Minister of the Interior to prevent their introduction. Terrier de Monciel on June 30 ordered the Departments to keep their *fédérés* at home; and in reply the Assembly offered free quarters in Paris from July 14 to 18, after which they were to be camped at Soissons. In spite of this, the firm attitude of the Minister so far had effect and so far succeeded that by July 14, the date of the Federation, not more than

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3000 *fédérés* had arrived; and it must be remembered that many of them were genuine volunteers, and that between July 14 and 30 more than 5000 left for the front. Unfortunately, their departure merely weeded out all the respectable men, and left none but those who had never intended to go to the front at all, but had come to Paris for the chance of excitement, adventure, and plunder. Of these pseudo-*fédérés* the most violent contingent was that sent from Marseilles, and it was the delay in its arrival that postponed the crisis. Meanwhile a fresh "Directory of Insurrection" was meeting, drawn mainly from the subordinate ranks of the Jacobins. It included Carra, Santerre, Antoine, Lazowski, Fournier, Guillaume, and Westermann; but both its actions and the whole organisation of insurrection were controlled by Danton from his position as *Procureur Substitut* of the Commune.

Danton's antecedents had given little indication of the part he was now to play: he was a fairly successful barrister of thirty when the Revolution began. Born in 1759 of *bourgeois* parents at Arcis-sur-Aube, his first political enterprises had been somewhat inglorious; but the outbreak of war seems to have tapped latent springs, which now, on his re-entry into politics, supplied an undercurrent of true patriotism beneath the eddies of ambition and intrigue. Danton's character, for all its blemishes, rings true: the blemishes were conspicuous, for he was wholly unartificial. Cruel, regardless of human life, unscrupulous, probably corrupt, he was yet a true patriot; and it was patriotism, even more than the ambition natural to a man so conscious of his power, that threw him into politics at this juncture. While he was passionately patriotic he was also intensely practical; and to a large extent this accounts for, though it does not condone, the unscrupulous means which he used to gain his ends. To him the end was everything, the means nothing; but the end was not self-seeking or cowardly, however base the means.

With Danton's approval, and under the guidance of the Directory of Insurrection, several abortive outbreaks now occurred. The first of these took place so early as June 25; another premature attempt on July 21 had been stopped by the warnings of Pétion; a banquet given to the *fédérés* on July 26 had been a critical moment. Finally, on the 30th, the Marseillais marched into Paris. It had been intended to lead them straight against the Tuileries; but exaggerated rumours of serious preparations at the palace cooled the ardour of the insurrectionaries, and once more the catastrophe was postponed.

Two great instruments were in fact in course of preparation to ensure the success of the outbreak. The meetings of the Sections were being organised to counterfeit the voice of the people; and the National Guard was being further democratised. The forty-eight Sections or primary Assemblies of the electors of Paris, which should have been entirely dissolved after the completion of their electoral functions, had

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quite illegally resumed their sittings. Their very illegality was indeed of a certain advantage to them, for it gave them, as unofficial bodies, the right to petition, which was withheld from legally constituted authorities, and of this they made free use; but it also put them at a disadvantage; for when on July 11 the country, on the motion of Hérault, was declared in danger, all legally constituted bodies began *ipso facto* to sit "*en permanence*," but the Sections having no legal status could not do so. This leave to sit "*en permanence*" was greatly coveted, as it would leave the Sections at the mercy of the *Enragés*. At the regular meetings the Moderates in many Sections still possessed a majority and were able to carry Moderate resolutions, and to present positively reactionary petitions, some even refusing to open their galleries to the public. But when on July 25 the Assembly decreed that the Sections were to sit "*en permanence*," the Moderates could be worn down by sheer physical fatigue. When the respectable members were compelled by exhaustion to retire, incendiary motions could be carried by a handful of ruffians; and a small but energetic minority could represent its will as that of a whole Section. The result of the decree of July 25 was the announcement three days later by Carra that forty-seven of the forty-eight Sections favoured the deposition of the King.

Equally important were the changes now introduced in the organisation of the National Guard. The insurrectionaries were determined that the disloyalty of that body should no longer be ambiguous. A decree was therefore carried on August 1, on the motion of Carnot, opening its ranks to passive as well as to active citizens, and sanctioning the temporary arming of recruits with pikes. At the same time the *état-major* was reorganised on democratic lines; officers were forbidden to give any orders save those sanctioned by the Commune; the artillery was organized by Sections and the special "*compagnies d'élite*" suppressed; while, by order of the Mayor, the duty of guarding the Tuileries was handed over to an agglomeration of drafts from all battalions with the result that all sense of unity and mutual confidence were destroyed. Finally a number of *fédérés* were introduced into the ranks. There could be little doubt after these changes which way the National Guard would lean when the rising broke out.

Meanwhile Paris was in a state of ferment. On the decree of "*Patrie en danger*" (passed July 11, carried out July 22 and 23), a black flag was hoisted over the Hôtel de Ville, and recruiting *bureaux* were established at every street corner, while two *cortèges* of officials patrolled the town at regular intervals to the sound of the trumpet. Every day saw the arrival of fresh bands of *fédérés* and the departure of more volunteers for the front. On July 30 the formidable and long-expected Marseillais marched in through the Porte St Antoine amidst great enthusiasm. To Paris thus excited by marchings and recruitings there

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came on August 3 a manifesto from the Duke of Brunswick. This astoundingly impolitic document, while disclaiming all desire of conquest and all intention of meddling in the internal affairs of France, and calling on the sane majority of the French people to declare themselves against the "odious schemes of their oppressors," threatened with all "the rigour of the laws of war" those who dared to defend themselves against the invading troops, and the citizens and town of Paris in the event of a further violation of the Tuileries with an "exemplary and never-to-be-forgotten vengeance," by "giving up the town to military execution and total subversion, and the guilty rebels to the death they had deserved." The only effect of Brunswick's indiscreet language was to divert to the side of the insurgents many hundreds of moderate men. The very next day there was a further alarm; and, though it came to nothing, everyone in Paris now knew that the great insurrection would not be long delayed.

Both sides were now making their final preparations. On July 25 the terrace of the *Feuillants*, which gave access to the gardens of the Tuileries, was placed under the control of the Assembly. The Directory of Insurrection, feeling itself too small and unauthoritative to carry out its programme, in face of the rather half-hearted attitude of the Commune and the Assembly — for the Brissotins were by this time inclined to side with the King, if only he would restore their Ministry — determined (August 9) that the Sections, which had already (July 17) a central "*Bureau de Correspondance*" sitting at the Hôtel de Ville, should elect a body of commissioners "to consider the measures to be taken in the existing circumstances." This body would have, what no private body of conspirators could have, the semblance of having been freely chosen by the citizens of Paris in their primary Assemblies. As a matter of fact, the Sections being *en permanence*, it was arranged for the elections to take place at night after all moderate members had retired; indeed, many of the Section halls were found deserted save by a few ruffians slumbering on the benches. Twenty at least of the Sections declined to elect; others elected but gave their representatives no mandate; in the Arsenal Section only six members were found, who promptly elected three of their number; but, in spite of irregularities and obstacles, Commissioners began to arrive at the Hôtel de Ville at about 1 a.m. (August 10); and, when Danton looked in at 3 o'clock, he found nineteen Sections represented, Huguenin in the chair, and Tallien secretary. Amongst the Commissioners were Panis, Sergent, Robert, Rossignol, Hébert, Marat, Simon, Lhuillier, and Léonard Bourdon. Robespierre, Fabre d'Églantine, and Billaud, were also elected, but with characteristic caution seem to have refrained from taking their seats till the insurrection was over. No reliance, however, can be placed on the lists of those present on this critical occasion, as they were drawn up on the following day, when the names of many who had not actually been

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present were incorporated. Thus in the small hours of the morning of August 10 this sinister body installed itself under the same roof with the legal Commune, ready, should occasion arise, to usurp the authority of that body, and armed with the semblance of a popular mandate.

Meanwhile, with the slender forces at their disposal, the defenders of the Tuileries were making what preparations they could. Mandat, who, as *Commandant Général* of the National Guard for the current month, was responsible for the protection of the palace, and the maintenance of order in the city, was an absolutely loyal and devoted man. It is difficult to estimate the forces under his command. In addition to the ordinary guard he had issued summonses to sixteen extra battalions (10,000 men); but very few responded, and little reliance could be placed on those who did. With them was a small force of mounted *gendarmerie*, but it was evident that the brunt of the defence would fall on the Swiss Guard. An attempt had been made (July 17) to disband that force, but the Ministers had managed to keep it at hand; and now on August 9, to the number of 950, it took up the defence of the Tuileries. The total force of the defenders was probably about 2500.

In his preparations Mandat had been much hampered by the duplicity of Pétion. That functionary was ostensibly on the side of order; in his heart of hearts, however, he favoured the revolt. Thus it was by his directions that the Swiss were admitted through the barriers, but also by his order that they were supplied with only thirty rounds of ammunition per man, and the remainder of the garrison with only three. Hampered as he was, Mandat nevertheless made his dispositions with considerable skill, and issued his orders with clear determination. To prevent the junction of the crowds from St Antoine and St Marcel, he posted a guard on each of the bridges; and it was against these, especially against that which held the Pont Neuf, where the alarm-gun was stationed, that the first efforts of the insurrectionaries were directed. By means of orders extracted from the Commune, and aided by the disloyalty of the gunners, the bridges were at last secured and the alarm-gun was fired. But, in spite of this preliminary success, there were signs of some hitch in the insurrection. The results of the efforts made to gather a great crowd were disappointing. The *tocsin* which began to ring at about 12.45 on the morning of the 10th brought a few recruits and the alarm-gun a few more, not enough, however, to ensure success in a conflict with a man of Mandat's determination. The leaders of the insurrection therefore decided to secure the person of the *Commandant*.

Mandat was at the Tuileries, where the apparent failure of the riot had, after 2.30 a.m., created a more hopeful feeling. At about 5 a.m. he received a summons — the second — from the Commune. At this time there was no information at the Tuileries as to the true state of affairs at the Hôtel de Ville, where the Commune had become a mere tool in the hands of the Sectional Commissioners; yet Mandat

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did not wish to leave his post. Roederer, however, who, with other officials of the Department and the Commune, was present in the palace, persuaded him that he was constitutionally bound to obey. The *Commandant* therefore reluctantly proceeded to the Hôtel de Ville and presented himself before the *Conseil Général* of the Commune. His examination before that body was neither long nor important; but, on emerging from the council-room, he was seized and hurried into the hall of the Sectional Commissioners, where began the real business for which he had been brought. Interrogated as to the garrison of the Tuileries, he courageously deceived the Commissioners as to its strength, and, on being invited to sign an order directing one-half of the defenders to withdraw, heroically declined. This was the signal for his arrest, and his arrest was the signal for the interference of the Commune. That body protested that the Commissioners were exceeding their powers; the Commissioners replied by voting the suspension of the Commune and proceeded to occupy the Council hall and to establish themselves — were they not the elect of the primary Assemblies? — as the Provisional Commune of Paris. The full import of this *coup de main* was at once seen. Mandat was ordered to the Abbaye prison, and on his way there was done to death on the stairs of the Hôtel de Ville; and Pétion, whose equivocal attitude was no longer sufficient, was, greatly to his own relief, placed in confinement. The conduct of the insurrection, and with it the future government of France, thus passed into the hands of the Sectional Commissioners.

Meanwhile at the Tuileries the weakness of the defence, after Mandat's departure, had been manifested by the very mixed reception given to the King, when he descended to the courts and the gardens to review the troops. It may have been this disaffection, combined with the appearance of the first rioters with twelve pieces of artillery on the Place du Carrousel, that convinced the King's advisers that it would be best for him to proceed to the Assembly for protection; or it may have been, as Roederer's very frank narrative seems to indicate, the fear that the troops might make a stout resistance, and that, having driven off the rioters, they might attempt some *coup* on the Assembly. Louis at first hesitated, urging that he saw very few people in the Carrousel; but he had lost his military adviser, and ultimately the argument of the "twelve cannon" persuaded him at about 8.30 a.m. to leave the Tuileries for the Assembly, accompanied by the Queen, the royal family, and a few attendants.

The retreat of the King was the signal for the desertion of the great majority of the National Guard; and the Swiss, finding that they were left alone to defend the Tuileries, abandoned the outer courts and withdrew into the palace itself. The mob was thus able to enter the Cour Royale, where it found the few remaining National Guards and the *gendarmerie* ready to fraternise with it. The Swiss, however, presented

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a resolute front and resisted the blandishments of Westermann, who harangued them in their own tongue. Who fired the first shot was never known; if it came from the Swiss it must be remembered that they were being subjected to the greatest provocation. It was followed by a volley from the Swiss on the grand staircase and another from the first-floor windows. The crowd hastily retreated across the Carrousel and found shelter among the buildings that encumbered the square. An ineffective exchange of shots continued for about three-quarters of an hour. The Swiss then cleared the square by a sally and had almost obtained a comparatively bloodless victory over their cowardly opponents, when an order arrived from the King that they should cease firing and withdraw to their barracks.

It seems that Louis thought that he had, before he left the palace, given orders for the Swiss to withdraw; but when he heard the volleys he should have known that it was too late for them to obey; and his actual written order, coming when it did, was a piece of culpable folly and simply handed over the lives of his devoted body-guard to the mob. The Swiss withdrew in good order by way of the garden; and the rioters, though not without hesitation, took possession of the palace and put practically every living male found within it to the sword. The retreating Swiss were shot down as they crossed the garden, and the remnant, 200 or 250 men, obedient to a further order from the King, laid down their arms and were imprisoned in the Church of the *Feuillants*, where many of them were massacred on the following day. The loss on the popular side during the fighting has been estimated at 100 killed and 60 severely wounded. Of the defenders it may be said that practically no one was killed during the fighting. A few escaped by way of the Louvre and a tiny remnant of the Swiss survived; the rest perished after the order to withdraw.

The King meanwhile and the royal family had been lodged by the Assembly in a reporter's box, where they actually remained from 10 a.m. on the 10th till 3 a.m. on the 11th, while the Assembly discussed their fate. In face of the ascendancy of the insurrectionary Commune, the Assembly was in a very cowed condition: only 284 members were present as against 630 two days previously. A deputation from the Commune, which practically ordered them to depose the King, was received with unctuous flattery. At 11 a.m. on the 10th, however, Vergniaud propounded the Brissotin plan. He proposed that a "Convention" should be summoned to produce a new Constitution, that the King should be not deposed but suspended from his office, that the Civil List should be abolished, but that at the same time a *gouverneur* should be appointed for the Dauphin, and that the King should be lodged in the Luxembourg with an allowance for expenses. These proposals, which the Assembly accepted, show that the majority of the Brissotin party had been playing all along not for a Republic, but for a change of King which

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should put the power in their hands by the re-establishment of a Brissotin Ministry. The next step therefore was to vote the recall of Roland, Clavière, and Servan, to whom were added Lebrun, a subordinate of Dumouriez, for Foreign Affairs, Monge for the Admiralty, and Danton, the organiser of the insurrection, for the Ministry of Justice. This "Provisional Executive Council" was to hold office until the Convention met.

But it soon became clear that these measures would not satisfy the Commune. It was this body that had borne the actual burden of the revolt; and it had no intention of relinquishing its newly-won powers or of countenancing any form of monarchy, the re-establishment of which would not only secure the Brissotins in power, but would bring retribution to the ringleaders of the revolt. The Commune therefore was doubly committed to the establishment of a Republic. It was not, however, supported in this by a majority of Frenchmen, not even by a majority of Parisians. Paris, the nation, the Assembly itself, were all at heart monarchical. In Paris the very Sections, in spite of the domination of the faction, had some of them dared to protest against the attacks on the throne. To the strength of monarchical feeling throughout the country the *pétition des vingt-mille* is eloquent testimony; if 20,000 Frenchmen were ready to risk their necks, as they literally did, in the interests of the Constitution, it is only reasonable to believe that there was a vastly greater number who shared the views but not the courage of the signatories. Finally, the Assembly itself, when protected by the prestige of Lafayette, had betrayed its monarchical leanings by refusing on August 8 to impeach the General for his support of the Monarchy in June.

The Commune would therefore have to fight hard to gain its ends. Two immediate dangers confronted it: the attitude of Lafayette, and that of the *bourgeoisie* of Paris. Once more, as after the insurrection of June 20, it seemed likely that Lafayette would become the arbiter of the situation; everything appeared to be in his favour; he was supported, as we have seen, by a majority of the Assembly; he was at Sedan, within a few days' march of Paris; the Prussians were far away on the Moselle; the Departments were on his side, the National Guard in his favour; all seemed therefore to point to the success of a *coup de main*.

But Lafayette dreaded civil war, and was at any rate too good a patriot to resort to it in face of the enemy, nor was he inclined to repeat the experiment of a visit to Paris. He therefore determined to make himself the centre of the monarchical feeling which he knew to exist in the Provinces. With this object he summoned the Mayor of Sedan and other local magnates, and received from them assurances of support, readministered to his troops the oath of fidelity to the Constitution, and directed the other generals to do the same. The Commissioners,

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sent by the Assembly to exact an oath of fidelity to the new government, were arrested (August 14) by the municipality of Sedan. But Lafayette took no further active steps to carry out his plan: his sensitiveness to the accusation of treachery rendered his actions half-hearted. The occasion, however, was one where hesitation was fatal. The Executive Council promptly superseded him; and the general decided that there was nothing for it but to cross the frontier. He fell into the hands of the Austrians and remained a prisoner till 1797.

The first and most pressing danger to the new order of things disappeared with the flight of Lafayette. It was clear that the Provinces, unorganised, bewildered, and unled, would not make open resistance. They still trusted the Assembly, and it was the knowledge of this that decided the Commune to retain that body while riding rough-shod over it. A message was now sent through the Departments to say that Louis XVI was overthrown, and that there was no fear of treachery at home "because the Commune of Paris was watching over the Assembly." All the departmental authorities who had shown signs of reaction were suspended by the Executive Council; and, the submission of the Provinces being thus assured, the Commune was able to turn its attention to the danger that threatened it from the *bourgeoisie* of Paris. On the 11th, the issue being no longer in doubt, Robespierre took his seat in that body; and it was he, Billaud-Varennes, and Marat (who, though not a member, was granted a special *tribune* and the right to take part in the debates), that guided the Commune in the ensuing struggle.

Maximilien Robespierre now steps to the front as a figure of first-rate importance. After his arrival in Paris as a deputy of the Third Estate, his energies had at first been chiefly confined to the Jacobin Club, where his long-winded and self-conscious oratory had a vogue for which it is difficult to account. His own self-denying ordinance kept him out of the Legislative Assembly, and left him free to devote his talent for intrigue to the overthrow of the existing order. The ascendancy of this narrow, fastidious, insignificant, provincial barrister is one of the most curious facts of the period, a problem beyond the power of historians to solve. That he was unconcerned for his own pocket, and therefore free to use his ingenuity for the furtherance of his political ambitions, is proved beyond all doubt; in a period so utterly corrupt this incorruptibility no doubt told heavily in his favour. Over and above this, in spite of his narrow ignorance, Robespierre had yet all the attributes necessary for posing as an intellectual and literary genius: a refined appearance, a fastidiousness in dress uncommon in the circle in which he moved, an air of superior wisdom, and a command of language, which, because it was not eloquence, had all the more effect on audiences sated with rhodomontade and rhetoric. These advantages combined to give him that ascendancy over his blunt and brutal colleagues, which an appearance of refined taste, dialectical skill, and ingenuity, so often

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attains over simpler and coarser natures. Thus, while amongst the Vergniauds and Condorcets of the Assembly Robespierre would have been a laughing-stock, at the Jacobin Club, especially after the ejection of Brissot (October, 1792), his intellectual equipment, slender as it was, combined with his frigid and austere pose, and a certain feline fascination, won for him an influence which gradually became absolute.

Robespierre and his allies, convinced that they were in a minority, now determined to secure themselves in power by terrorising their opponents. On August 11 the signatories of the two famous petitions of *huit-mille* and *vingt-mille* were excluded from the exercise of public functions. On the 12th reactionary journals were suppressed; and, by closing the barriers and tampering with private correspondence, the Commune created an atmosphere of uneasiness in the city. The question now arose, how far would the Assembly allow the Commune to go? The majority of the deputies were not Republicans, nor were they on the side of disorder: most of them belonged to that very class at which the Commune was striking, and thus the contest of the Commune with the *bourgeoisie* resolved itself into a struggle with the Assembly.

But the Assembly was now but the shadow of its always shadowy self. Of its 745 members only about a third registered their votes, and it was by this time only too well accustomed to submit to the noisy dictation of galleries and deputations. The first struggle was over the custody of the King. The Commune was unwilling that any but itself should have the keeping of so valuable a hostage; and the Assembly on August 13 gave way, and handed over its prisoner to the Commune, by whom he was incarcerated in the Temple. After this first victory, the Commune looked round for some means of getting control of the lives of individuals. Events played into its hands. On August 11 the new police-law, long under consideration, had been passed by the Assembly. It handed over to the Commune the duty of "*recherche des crimes contre la sûreté de l'état*," and authorised all active citizens to drag before the authorities persons suspected of such crimes. Thus the life of every individual in Paris was placed at the mercy of the Commune. The Assembly made haste to remedy the harm done by this ill-considered measure, by reviving the power of the "*Conseil du département*"; but the furious outcry provoked by this step, and the appearance of Robespierre at the bar, overawed it into restricting the power of the revived *Conseil* to the assessment of taxes. The policing of Paris was thus secured to the Commune.

The next encroachment was upon the judicial authorities. Already the functions of *juges de paix* had been usurped by the Sectional Assemblies under the supervision of a "*Comité de surveillance*" of fifteen members of the Commune. Unlimited power of imprisonment had been accorded to certain Communal Commissioners, and a list of "opponents of the Revolution" had been handed to the tribunals. But this was not enough; and the Commune set itself to extort from the Assembly a

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special extraordinary tribunal. On August 11 a court-martial had been appointed to try the military prisoners of August 10; and the more important civil prisoners, including the ex-ministers, had been sent before the High Court of Orleans. At the dictation of the Commune the Assembly now abandoned the court-martial and ordered the election of new juries to try these cases in the criminal Courts. Robespierre upon this again appeared at the bar (August 15) and demanded a special tribunal, elected by the Sections, with unlimited power, from which there should be no appeal. The Assembly fought the matter point by point; but on the 17th, overpowered by the threats and persistence of the Commune, they were criminal enough and weak enough to decree the creation of a special tribunal.

The reason of all this revolutionary activity is not far to seek: the primary elections for the Convention, which the Assembly had decreed on August 10, were to commence on August 27, and the secondary on September 2. Aware that they were supported by but a small minority of the electors, the Commune employed these measures of terror simply to secure for themselves a majority at the polls; and by August 26 at any rate, not to suggest an earlier date, it had been decided that, to complete the Terror, a general massacre of the prisoners should take place to coincide with the opening of the secondary elections. Events on the frontiers played into the hands of the faction. On August 26, just at the critical moment when, on the eve of the primary elections, signs of a more determined resistance both from the Assembly itself and from some of the Sections were disclosing themselves, there arrived the news of the fall of the frontier town of Longwy. With the French armies intact this reverse was of trifling importance — so at any rate it was regarded by the generals at the front — but it was sufficient for the demagogues. On the 28th Danton, in the name of the Ministry, demanded permission for the Commune to subject the city to domiciliary visits, ostensibly in search for muskets, of which he alleged there were 80,000 in Paris, in reality to secure the arrest of all reactionaries. This was the crowning item in the great scheme for delivering over the Moderates of Paris to the faction. From the morning of the 28th to the evening of the 31st these visits were in progress; of the promised 80,000 muskets only 2000 were secured, but, in their real object, the arrest of Moderates, the result of the visits was all that could be desired; and by the evening of August 31 every prison was full to overflowing.

Meanwhile, however, people had begun to suspect ulterior motives in this revolutionary energy of the Commune; and some of the Sections petitioned against the continued usurpations of that body. The result was that on August 30, just when its plans were reaching consummation, the Commune found itself dissolved by decree of the Assembly. Set only on preserving for a few days its existence and that of its *Comité de Surveillance*, which was superintending the actual preparations for

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the massacres, the Commune went the length of restoring Pétion to the chair; and he now headed a deputation to the Assembly, where a long memoir prepared by Robespierre was read, enlarging on the services of the Commune. During the whole of the 31st the Assembly stood firm, but on September 1 Thuriot, prompted by Danton, persuaded it to reinstate the Commune.

The very next day was that on which the faction had decided to strike. It was hoped that the news of the fall of Verdun might arrive in time to serve as a pretext for the massacres; but it only reached Paris on September 4. The conspirators, therefore, had to make the most of the investment of that town and the probability of its fall; and Manuel proposed that, in view of the military crisis, the *tocsin* should be rung, the alarm-gun fired, the "*générale*" sounded, and all able-bodied citizens convoked to the Champ-de-Mars. The Assembly took up the cry, Vergniaud delivering an eloquent speech, and Danton the most famous of all his fiery orations. Meanwhile the *Comité de Surveillance* embarked upon the immediate preparations for the massacres. Co-opting a number of kindred spirits, it first moved the arrest of Roland, Brissot, and thirty other Brissotins — a deliberate attempt, though it proved unsuccessful, to include the Brissotins in the massacres; next it sent emissaries to some of the more violent Sections to extort a demand for the destruction of the prisoners. In two Sections (Poissonnière and Luxembourg) this was successful. Thus, when, at 2 p.m., the *tocsin* began to ring and the populace to flock to the Champ-de-Mars, the bands of assassins already gathered by the *Comité* started on their mission.

The first victims were twenty-four priests who were awaiting examination in the cells of the Mairie itself. These unfortunates were bundled into carriages and conducted towards the Abbaye. On the way their escort of *fédérés* tried to provoke the populace to attack them, and, when they refused, set upon the victims themselves. On their arrival at the Abbaye the butchery was soon completed. The murderers now split up into detachments and distributed themselves among the various prisons. To give colour to the legend of "popular justice," no doubt also to save any friends of the assassins, informal tribunals, on which the murderers themselves sat, were established: before these the miserable prisoners were dragged: all priests, royalists, and "aristocrats," were condemned at once and thrust out of the Salle de Justice on to the pikes of the murderers in the courtyard without. That no attempt at any kind of justice was made by these self-constituted tribunals is proved by the fact that many of the victims were common criminals, whose very crimes one might have thought would have commended them to such judges; 43 were boys under eighteen, and at least 35 were women.

Amidst every circumstance of horror this carnage continued, with little interference from without, for four whole days. In Paris alone 1400 people perished. But the massacre was not confined to Paris; on

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the contrary, to extend it to the Provinces, where the danger of reaction was very threatening, was one of the first objects of its promoters. Many of the most important of the State prisoners were at Orleans; and on August 30 the Assembly, on the demand of the Commune, had sent Fournier, an agent of the *Comité de Surveillance*, to fetch them — 43 in number — to Paris. On September 3, seeing what would be the fate of the prisoners if they entered Paris, the Assembly ordered Fournier to take them to Saumur. He disobeyed and conducted them to Versailles, where he was met on September 9 by a detachment of the expert of Paris murderers, who made short work of the prisoners.

This massacre had been devised as early as August 30, but it was not until September 3 that the idea of a general massacre throughout the Provinces was developed. On that day a circular was sent by the hands of Commissioners of the Commune to all the Departments, announcing the fact that a "portion of the fierce conspirators detained in the prisons had been put to death by the people," and suggesting that the entire nation should hasten to adopt a measure so necessary for the public safety. Fortunately this incitement had but little effect; and the massacres at Lyons, Meaux, Rheims, Charleville, and Caen, were comparatively insignificant. This, however, in no way exonerates the authors of the atrocious manifesto. It has been suggested that the entire document was forged by Marat, who had long openly cried out for wholesale massacres; but there is nothing in the antecedents of Panis, Sergent, and the other members of the *Comité de Surveillance*, whose signatures were attached to it, to make it improbable that these signatures were genuine. The fact that the circular went out in the official covers of the Ministry of Justice has been used as an argument to prove that Danton and Fabre d'Églantine were privy to it, though it lacked their countersign and the ministerial stamp. The suspicion against them is indeed strong; and when we remember Danton's attitude towards the Paris massacres, and the fact that he never denied, but rather took credit for, his share in both circular and massacres, it is difficult to acquit him.

So much for the circular; as to the responsibility for the Paris massacres the *Comité de Surveillance* must bear the direct and chief blame, but the Commune itself must have been aware of the acts of its committee. Entrusted as it was with the control of the armed force, and responsible, therefore, for the safe-keeping of the prisons, it could and should have ordered the National Guard to protect them; but the National Guard did nothing, and doubtless had its orders to do nothing. It could and should have thrown itself between the assassins and their victims; on the contrary, such of its members as entered the prisons entered them to encourage the murderers. Pétion, newly restored to power, was doubtless afraid for his own skin on account of his connexion with the Brissotins. On Thursday, the last day of the massacres, he

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actually went to the prison of La Force, was horrified, and remonstrated; but he regarded the ignoring of his remonstrances merely with mild surprise and went away. He certainly, however, went to Santerre and ordered him to use the National Guard; and on the whole, though his action was quite ineffective, he comes out of the matter better than the other authorities.

As to the Assembly, it did little to stop the massacres; it had, it is true, half-heartedly tried to avert them, but had given way to the Commune on every point before they began; and, now that they were in progress, it was not till September 4 that it called (quite ineffectively) upon the Sections to take steps to ensure the security of life and property. It must not be forgotten, however, that the Brissotins, who after August 10 constituted the large majority of the Assembly, had themselves been threatened, and doubtless it was fear for their own lives that made them loth to interfere.

With regard to the Executive Council, Danton and Roland were the Ministers directly responsible for the security of prisoners. As to the former it is impossible to believe that he was ignorant of what was being prepared by his intimates of the Commune, and circumstantial evidence accumulates round him from every side. It was he who filled the prisons, reinstated the Commune, ordered the *tocsin* to be rung. As Minister of Justice he was responsible for the life of each prisoner, and, himself the only truly strong man in Paris, he could have saved them. Yet his attitude was at best one of cynical indifference; and, if complete proof of his direct complicity in the massacres is still wanting, he is at least responsible for never having lifted a finger to stop them. Roland, the other responsible Minister, though his conduct was no whit more courageous, has at least this excuse, that his interference would almost certainly have been useless. This, however, scarcely justifies him in not interfering, and his talk of "drawing a veil" and of "events perhaps necessary" was as disgusting as it was cowardly; he had been directly threatened by Marat, and was doubtless afraid to move.

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CHAPTER IX

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION TO THE FALL OF THE GIRONDE

ALL eyes were now fixed on the approaching elections to the National Convention, which had been decreed by the Legislative Assembly on the morning of August 10, 1792.

The fate of the Republican party was staked upon the result; if the true feeling of France were allowed expression at the polls, the ascendancy of the Commune and the demagogues would be at an end. The leaders of that party were fully alive to the danger; they laboured under no illusions as to the real mind of the people of France, and they set themselves, with the vigour and unscrupulousness of men who know that not only their careers but their lives are at stake, to muzzle the expression of that mind. Above all it was necessary to prevent the Moderates from carrying the capital. To gag the whole country was a gigantic task; it would be attempted, but success was more than doubtful; in Paris, on the other hand, the demagogues had their chance. The city was already in a suitable state of paralysis; the forces of anarchy and terror were already at work; the Jacobin Club, the Commune, the armed bands, and the Radical press were so many instruments in the hands of the faction. If by their aid it could secure the return of a compact body of its adherents, it would be sure of the nucleus of a party in the Convention, and, if it could not hope for an actual majority there, it could make up for its numerical deficiency by the vigour of its actions; but, if Paris went Moderate, all was lost. Every nerve, therefore, was strained for a grand effort in that city.

The arrangements for the elections had been made by the Legislative Assembly. Manhood suffrage had been proposed, but not carried. The property qualification for electors indeed had been abolished, but at the same time the age limit (25 years), the disfranchisement of domestic servants, and the system of double voting, by primary and secondary elections, had been maintained. Under these provisions the primary elections took place in Paris between August 26 and September 1. There were in the capital and its environs some 200,000 voters; and it

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was certain that, if a reasonable percentage of them were to register their votes, the days of the faction would be numbered. It was therefore once more necessary to keep away from the polls as many of the respectable voters as possible. One can hardly help admiring the ingenuity and minute care for detail with which this disfranchisement was managed. The Sections had already claimed, and the Assembly weakly admitted the claim, that they should manage the details of the elections in their own way. Robespierre, making use of this concession, persuaded his own Section (*des Piques*), and, through it, the remainder of the Sections, to abolish the secrecy of the ballot and adopt the *vote-à-haute-voix*. In the excited and nervous condition of a city whose barriers were closed, and whose citizens were being subjected to domiciliary visits and other inquisitorial measures, it is difficult to overestimate the effect of this innovation; for each Section was easily filled with armed ruffians who would rage against every Moderate vote; and it must be remembered that all Paris was by this time dimly conscious of the approach of some murderous crisis, and every man who gave a Moderate vote felt that he might next day be on the list of the proscribed. It is not, therefore, astonishing that the polls were sparsely attended by the respectable classes.

In spite, however, of all the precautions adopted by the faction in the primary elections, it seems that they were by no means confident of the pure republicanism of the 900 secondary electors chosen. Robespierre had already caused it to be decreed that the voting at the secondary election should also be public, and that it should take place in the hall of the Jacobin Club, where the public galleries were gigantic and easily filled with a suitable mob, and where the very atmosphere would be favourable to the demagogues. Finally, lest in spite of all these precautions some undesirable names should creep in to mar the unity of the "Paris Deputation," the right of ostracism, in other words the right to revise the roll of the deputies elected, was reserved to the primary assemblies, a provision which entirely contravened the principle of double election.

It was, as had been arranged, under the terrible shadow of the September massacres that the 900 secondary electors gathered, on September 2, in the Archiepiscopal Palace; and it was through an alley of corpses — the victims of the Châtelet prison — stacked upon the Pont-au-Change, that Robespierre led them to the Club in the Rue St Honoré, and there proceeded to sift them like wheat, ejecting from the hall all who had signed either of the two petitions ("*huit-mille*" and "*vingt-mille*"), and all who "had been members of anti-civic societies." Murder without and unbridled proscription within soon reduced the remaining electors to a sufficiently plastic condition; and on September 5 they elected Robespierre himself first deputy for Paris, and after him Danton, Collot d'Herbois, Manuel, and Billaud-Varennes, all men of

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the most violent republicanism. One wonders how, in spite of all the precautions taken, any Moderates had managed to slip in; perhaps only because even Paris in September, 1792, could not provide 900 ruffians "*au niveau de la Révolution*" as conceived by Robespierre and his friends; yet both Kersaint and Priestley — men of pronounced Moderate opinions — were nominated; and it was only by dint of allowing public discussion of the merits of each candidate that Camille Desmoulins and Marat were preferred to them. The election of Marat, the instigator of the horrible outrages which were being perpetrated almost under the eyes of the electors, seemed to set a seal on the ignominy of the proceedings; but an even greater depth of ignominy was reached in the election of Philip, Duke of Orleans. This miserable man owed his election to the good offices of Marat, to whom he had rendered financial assistance; and it is probable that the subtle ingenuity of Robespierre prompted him to agree to his inclusion, in order that, should the Republic collapse, as it seemed at the time likely that it would, the faction should not be without a candidate for the throne. As soon as the continuance of the Republic was assured, Orleans was cast aside like dirt. He was the last deputy elected for Paris, and it may here be noted that on September 15, by permission of the Commune, he changed his name to Philippe Égalité. The names of the 24 members of the Paris deputation were as follows: — Robespierre, Danton, Collot d'Herbois, Manuel, Billaud-Varennes, Camille Desmoulins, Marat, Lavicomterie, Legendre, Raffron du Trouillet, Panis, Sergent, Robert, Dusaulx, Fréron, Beauvais de Préaux, Fabre d'Églantine, Osselin, Augustin Robespierre (brother of Maximilien), David the painter, Boucher, Laignelot, Thomas, and Philip of Orleans. The majority of them were mere nominees of Robespierre; and the result of the election was as much a personal triumph for him as a political victory for the faction. From this time forward he must be reckoned as one of the most important powers in the Revolution.

It was not to be expected that the faction would sweep the board in the Provinces so easily as it had in Paris; yet in some places, in the great industrial centres especially, it was able by means of its local organisations to apply what may be called the Parisian methods. Although only in ten of the Departments was the *vote-à-haute-voix* imposed on the electors, in most places secondary electors with mandates in favour of the Monarchy or of the Constitution of 1791 were successfully — though quite illegally — ostracised. A remarkable feature of the provincial elections was the dearth of respectable candidates, another proof that what the majority of the middle classes wanted was simply peace to enjoy the fruits of 1789. The consequence was that many obscure men were sent up to the Convention, as well as many professional politicians totally unknown to their constituents and elected only on newspaper reputations. But the number of votes recorded gives the best

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indication of the character of the elections. Of the 7,590,000 primary electors in France, it is reckoned that not more than 630,000 registered their votes, while of the secondary electors 25 per cent. abstained. The conclusion is that the Convention was elected, the Republic proclaimed, the King executed, and the Terror established on the mandate of about 6 per cent. of the electors of France.

While these elections were in progress Paris had been given up to pillage; and stolen property to the amount of many millions had fallen into the hands of the Commune. On the 16th the Garde-Meuble was broken into and property to the value of 24,000,000 *livres* was stolen, including the Crown diamonds. The expiring Assembly meanwhile was concerned with financial affairs, and by decrees of September 5 and September 16 forbade the export of specie and plate, the fabrication of paper-money having been renewed on September 1. But now, in view of the reactionary attitude of the Provinces, the failure of the Circular, the non-success of the faction at the polls, and the increasing courage of the Moderate Sections of Paris, the Assembly at last took heart and passed decrees restricting the powers of Commissioners of the Ministry, and ordering the arrest of any persons posing as Commissioners of the Commune. Next, tardily enough it is true, an attempt was made to restore order and security in the capital. On September 17 arbitrary arrests and violation of houses were forbidden, and the Commune was held responsible for the lives of prisoners. Finally, on the last day of its existence, the Legislative decreed that every citizen must be provided with a *carte de civisme* from his Section — a measure which, by driving strangers out of the city, at first worked for order, but was afterwards converted into a powerful weapon of terror. New municipal elections were also ordered. The Assembly took control of the *tocsin* and alarm-gun, and reserved to itself the exclusive right to employ all armed forces other than the National Guard — a blow specially directed at the *fédérés* from the Provinces, many of whom were still in Paris. After this tardy but vigorous effort for the restoration of order the Legislative dissolved itself, and on September 21 was replaced in the *Manège* by the National Convention, which had already held two preliminary sittings in the Tuileries.

Of the 782 members of the new Convention, 75 had sat in the Constituent and 183 in the Legislative. There were many lawyers and members of local administrations, some retired officers, and 48 of the Constitutional clergy. The electioneering campaign of the faction had so far failed that it was found to control no more than about 50 members, of whom the Paris deputation accounted for 24; while the Brissotins, or Girondins as they should now be called, mustered some 120 supporters, the remainder (*i.e.* the majority) of the deputies not being identified with either side. The Girondins, however, had so little desire to be considered Moderate, that they were unwilling at first to occupy

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the benches upon which the *Feuillants* of the Legislative had sat, which, although always known as the "Right," were, after the changes made on December 27, 1791, actually on the left of the President's chair; and it was only after considerable hesitation, and when the breach between themselves and the faction had widened, that they finally identified themselves with the Right side of the House. Opposite to them, high upon the extreme "Left," sat the little knot of *Enragés*, the Mountain as it came to be called; while on the lower benches on the floor of the House, the *Marais* or Plain, sat the great mass of independent deputies. Amongst the *Montagnards*, in addition to the Paris deputies, with whose names we are already familiar, sat many men who were afterwards to become famous, the two Prieurs, Carnot, Merlin of Thionville, Robert Lindet, Jean Bon-Saint-André, Philippeaux, Carrier, Fouché, Tallien, Le Bas, Saint-Just, Hérault, Lacroix, Chabot, and Bazire. These men, afterwards to be so widely separated, were for the present united by the bond of joint responsibility for the dethronement of the King. They were Republicans, not so much from principle, as because a Republic, and a Republic controlled by themselves, was the only form of government in which their lives would be safe.

Amongst the Girondins sat nearly all the Brissotins of the Legislative; Condorcet, Gensonné, Guadet, Brissot, Vergniaud, and Isnard being the most prominent. These men had before August 10 been divided on the question of a Republic. Vergniaud, Guadet, and Gensonné, in particular, had not desired the fall of the throne, and had in fact made secret advances to the Court after June 20; but there had always been among them a small band of determined Republicans centring in the *salon* of Madame Roland; and these were now recruited by the advent of a number of young and hot-headed deputies, the most conspicuous of whom were Buzot, Louvet, Rebecqui, and Barbaroux.

The Plain, which constituted the large majority of the Convention, contained many notable men, Grégoire, Sieyès, Larévellière-Lépeaux, Letourneur, Treilhard, Camus, Merlin of Douai, Boissy d'Anglas, and Barras; worthy of special mention is Cambon, who for two years was to control the finances of France; but the typical man of the Plain was Barère, who by his vivid imagination, fluent tongue, and constant readiness to speak, combined with his dexterity in concealing his motives, in choosing phrases of double meaning, and in explaining away his own words without apparent inconsistency, acquired a most sinister influence over his colleagues. Drawn for the most part from the lower middle and small professional classes, the men of the Plain were naturally inclined at first to look for their lead to the Girondins rather than to the Mountain, whose violence, and especially their participation in the recent atrocities, horrified them; Lanjuinais' phrase, "*Quand je suis arrivé à Paris j'ai frémi*," well expresses the attitude of the more respectable deputies of the Plain.

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Here, then, lay the Girondins' chance; if they could turn this anti-anarchical feeling against the faction, the future of France was in their hands.

During the first days of the Convention nothing seemed more probable; the majority of the deputies leant by predilection towards the Gironde. The first President and all the Secretaries were Girondins; the Ministry, since Danton, having resigned on September 29 in order to take his seat in the Convention, had been replaced by Garat, was strongly Girondin, and was dominated by Roland, who, though obstinate and pedantic, was not without traces of that courage of which he continually boasted. There were at least 5000 regular troops in Paris at the disposal of the government. A strong revulsion of feeling against the excesses of August and September was evident, not only in the Provinces but in the capital itself, where some even of the more revolutionary Sections petitioned against the continued tyranny of the illegal municipality. The cards therefore seemed to be all in the hands of the Gironde; the question was, would they have the courage to lead them?

The very first decree of the Convention showed that the Girondins had decided to disavow their monarchical leaning, and to outbid their Republican rivals in order to secure control of the government; for on September 21 all parties united in a decree abolishing the Monarchy in France.

The ground was now clear for the struggle of the Gironde against the Mountain and the Commune. The Gironde, who had prepared the Revolution, were not inclined to allow their rivals who had executed it to reap all the fruits. Their first blow was delivered through the medium of a report of the Minister of the Interior on the condition of France (August 23). Into this report Roland introduced covert allusions to the massacres and the evil influence of the Commune, even hinting that the attitude of Paris was becoming injurious to the Revolution. There followed eight days of personal recrimination, during which Robespierre was categorically accused by Rebecqui and Barbaroux of aspiring to a dictatorship—sufficient proof of the outspokenness of his opponents. After this, issue was joined on the question of the misdeeds of the *Comité de Surveillance* of the Commune. So fierce was the outcry against this body, and so shaken were the *Montagnards* by the courage of their opponents, that the *Conseil Général* of the Commune on September 29 was fain to cut its committee adrift, and even consented to allow the approaching elections for the renewal of half the members of the Commune itself to be ante-dated.

The Girondins now fell into the blunder, which was always to dog their footsteps, of sacrificing vigour of action to violence of invective. They seem to have taken fright at their own temerity, and, instead of breaking the *Comité de Surveillance* at once, contented themselves with

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tamely demanding its accounts. Marat cleverly threw odium on Roland by suggesting that his accounts also might not be the worse for a little auditing; and the attack on the Committee died tamely away.

Very similar was the conduct of the Gironde in their treatment of another matter of importance which came up on September 24. On that day a letter from Roland announced a renewal of atrocities in Châlons-sur-Marne; this news provoked a succession of outspoken protests from Kersaint, Vergniaud, and Lanjuinais; but it was Buzot who proposed the formation of a Committee of Six to report on the condition of the country and the capital, to draw up a law against instigators of murder, and to propose steps for the provision of a *Garde Départementale* to protect the Convention. This Committee, reporting on October 8, recommended the summoning of 4470 guards from the Departments for the purpose indicated. The report was the object of a general attack in the Radical press, especially in the organs of Robespierre, Prudhomme, and Marat; it also provoked a great outcry in the Jacobin Club, and was instrumental in getting Brissot expelled — an incident which definitely marks the secession of the Girondins from the Jacobin party. Finally on October 19, the Sections, at the instigation of Chaumette, Vice-President of the *Conseil Général* of the Commune, presented an insolent petition to the Assembly, denouncing the formation of the *Garde* as an insult to Paris. Gensonné replied in brave words that the Assembly could only receive orders from the people of France; but once more timidity of action followed on temerity of speech, and the Girondins themselves hastened to shelve the very measure which they had proposed with such parade of courage.

More successful was their struggle against the camp which had been established after August 10 in the northern suburbs of Paris. This camp had been designed, not only as a training ground for volunteers, but as a fortification for the defence of the capital, to which every patriot might contribute his labour. During the month of August it had been the fashion for men and women to go and dig on the ramparts, but in September the enthusiasm had died down; all the serious volunteers had gone to the front, so that the camp was no longer necessary; and after Valmy the immediate need for fortifications had disappeared. But the camp was useful to the Commune; accordingly a daily wage was awarded to every idle rascal who would consent to make pretence of working with a spade, with the result that innumerable loafers both from Paris and from the neighbouring country flocked thither; and the camp became a splendid recruiting-ground for the forces of disorder. The Convention now boldly demanded the imposition of piece-work, a system that strikes a loafer in his tenderest place; and when, after a long wrangle, this innovation was decreed, the camp was doomed, and on November 3 the works ceased.

But the greatest triumph of the Convention over the Commune was

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in the elections for a new Mayor, which took place between October 4 and November 30. These votings are most interesting, both as the last victory of the Moderates before July, 1794, and also as a further proof of the utter indifference, or utter cowardice, of the voters of Paris and of the true numerical weakness of the faction. Of the 160,000 voters in the city not more than one-tenth was attracted to any one of the numerous elections which now took place. It is hardly possible that many of the absentees can have been men of extreme views; all such were carefully gathered to the polls, as the faction was now fighting with its back to the wall. Yet, not only was the faction consistently unsuccessful at each of the elections, but the sum-total of its poll never rose over 5000. After Pétion had been elected and had refused, no less a person than d'Ormesson, an ex-*Contrôleur-Général* of the *ancien régime*, was elected by a majority of some 500 over Lhuillier, the Jacobin candidate. When he also refused, Chambon, a physician of the Salpêtrière, a Moderate almost of the Bailly type, was chosen by 8358 votes to 3900. It was most unfortunate that the Moderates were unable to keep their poll up to this level in the elections to the *Conseil Général* of the Commune, which commenced on December 2. It was the usual story; respectable men were too busy to spare the time for prolonged elections. On this occasion not one in twenty voters came to the poll, with the result that, although it had a Moderate Mayor, the new Commune was as much in the hands of the faction as the old. Twenty-eight only of the members of the old Commune were re-elected, but these included all the ringleaders. Chaumette and Hébert, who had led the insurrectionary Commune after the translation of Robespierre and Billaud-Varennes to the Convention, were made respectively *Procureur* and *Procureur Substitut*; the new blood was if possible more ruffianly than the old, and thus the renovation of the Commune brought no profit to the Moderates; rather, by legalising what had been illegal, it left them worse off than before.

Still, although there were plentiful signs of growing weakness in the Girondin party, it had managed to get through the first month with a fair degree of success. One very important access of strength it received in the shape of a new band of *fédérés* from Marseilles, who this time were to be on the side of order. On October 21 a deputation, introduced by Barbaroux, expressed the attachment of these Marseillais to the Gironde. But here again opportunities were not utilised; and instead of organising the new arrivals the Gironde allowed the Jacobins to tamper with them, and thus carelessly threw away what might have been a great access of strength.

Meanwhile, although their actions were vacillating, the oratorical courage of the Girondins seemed only to increase. The personal attacks on the formidable leaders of the Mountain grew daily more virulent, and culminated on October 29 in a great denunciation of Robespierre.

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Louvet, the author of this attack, was a new acquisition to the party; he had entered the Convention as a novice to politics, and had allied himself with the Rolands. He now seized the opportunity of a report of the Minister of the Interior on "the state of the capital since August 10," to bring grave and specific charges against Robespierre, reviving in his rhetorical attack all the accusations that had been brought against the demagogue by Rebecqui and Barbaroux on September 25. Louvet's action, though not without courage, only served to display the inherent weakness of his party. The Girondins were without leaders and organisation, and the younger members of the party, being uncontrolled, continually broke away and ran riot. This was what now occurred. Louvet's attack took his party by surprise, with the result that, instead of the charges being pressed home at once, five days were allowed for the preparation of the defence. In this interval Robespierre was able to mould in his own favour such public opinion as existed; and, when on November 5 he read his reply, the galleries were packed with his adherents and he had little difficulty in refuting Louvet's charges. It was a serious reverse for the Gironde, and the first clear indication that the future was not theirs but the Mountain's. They had shown their inability either to attack or to resist their opponents with anything save words; and it now only remained to be seen how far their opponents would be able to carry them whither they would not.

If we ask how it was that the Girondins failed when all seemed so much in their favour, the answer is fourfold. In the first place they lacked moral force. They had played all along for their own hand. Posing as men of principle they were in reality swayed only by overpowering ambition. Without any general conviction in favour of a Republic they had exposed the monarchy to attack, simply in order to recover power for themselves. To effect this selfish end, they had not scrupled to arouse anarchic forces which they both disliked and knew to be immoral. The violence of these forces had carried them beyond the limits of their original designs; and they were now to find that they must either march with their anarchical allies or surrender the government to them. They were in fact no longer able to control the forces which they had set in motion; moreover, by their employment of these forces they had violated their own political conscience and so undermined their political position.

In the second place the Girondins lacked cohesion, were indeed entirely without the organisation of a party. They had many prominent, even pre-eminent men, but no leader; and what the unconvinced Plain required was a definite lead. The eloquence of Vergniaud, the erudition of Condorcet, the biting sarcasms of Guadet, the cold irony of Gensonné, the reckless courage of Louvet, the complacent self-confidence of Brissot, and the shallow superiority of the Rolands, did not compensate for want of political capacity, not to say statesmanship; and time after

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time in the autumn of 1792 these men foiled one another for want of proper discipline and control.

In the third place the Gironde had little popular support in the country, none at all in Paris. What the majority of Frenchmen desired was a return to moderation; and such a return was hardly to be expected from men so long identified with a policy of violence. Most men therefore favoured neither party and were content to watch the internecine struggle with no more than the languid interest of spectators, rightly regarding the Girondins as even more responsible than the *Montagnards* for the overthrow of all that, politically speaking, they held most precious.

Lacking moral force, lacking leadership, and lacking popular support, the Girondins also lacked a common policy. Violence and anarchy having served their turn, they certainly now desired a return to order, to security for life and property, and to legal and civilised methods of government; but they had no common plan for translating these wishes into facts, and above all no determination to force through the necessary measures. We have seen how the *Garde Départementale* was decreed and the decree never carried out; how the *fédérés*, who had at first favoured the Gironde, were allowed to fall away and become the servants of the *Montagnards*; how the trial of the September criminals was constantly threatened and as constantly postponed; how men were denounced only to be exonerated, and accusations raised only to be dropped. We are now to see the Girondins vote the King's death against their will, thereby alienating for ever all moderate opinion both at home and abroad; and we shall watch them forge one by one the instruments by which they were themselves to fall, and by which their rivals were to be established in power.

With quick discernment the Mountain had seen that the question of the King's life was the key to the position. There was no real urgency in the matter; but, rather than incur a suspicion of Royalism, every politician could be made to vote urgency. If the Gironde were brave enough, when the matter came up for discussion, to avow their real feelings and protect Louis, the Mountain would be able to attack them for Royalist leanings; if on the other hand they could frighten the Gironde into acquiescence, and so compel them to share the stigma of regicide, they would finally isolate their opponents from the support of moderate France, while at the same time they would create a European crisis demanding a strong and unscrupulous government, which the Mountain could provide, but the Gironde could not. Calculating on the cowardice of their opponents, the *Montagnards* entrusted to them the preliminary investigations into the charges against Louis; and a Girondist Committee was appointed to examine the Royal papers seized on August 10; the most important of which were those of the officials of the Civil List. The report of this Committee was introduced by Valazé on November 3, and was marked by that total disregard of justice

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which was to characterise every stage of the proceedings. Among other reckless charges, for instance, Louis was accused of *accaparement*, that is of buying up grain, sugar, coffee, etc., in order to create famine. Three days later Mailhe presented the report of the Committee of Legislation in which the legality of the trial was discussed. It had been a difficult task for the Committee to find legal justification for the proceedings. It was patent that Louis was doubly cleared from all crimes committed before 1791 by the amnesty of that year as well as by the doctrine of responsibility of ministers; while from those committed after his acceptance of the Constitution, he was exonerated by the inviolability which that Constitution guaranteed him. Over and above this, for bearing arms against France, the one "crime" of which by a stretch of terms Louis might be considered guilty, the allotted penalty was deposition; and this he had already suffered. Thus both as an act of justice and as a constitutional act the trial fell to the ground at once.

With plausible sophistry therefore the report of Mailhe argued that the matter was one of State necessity, and that the nation being sovereign could override its own Constitution. Louis must consequently be tried by the nation; and, as the Convention was the nation's fully accredited representative, it was the only possible tribunal. The debates which arose out of this report showed the attitude of parties. They were envenomed by insinuations of Royalism on one side and of "Orleanism" on the other, with the result that neither party dared to support Louis, and that many of those who at heart wished to save him were terrified into denouncing him. Of all the prominent politicians Lanjuinais alone lifted his voice, as he lifted it in all righteous causes, against the specious arguments of Mailhe's report; but Lanjuinais was not a Girondin but a non-party man, and, what the Girondins have so often been wrongly deemed, a true lover of freedom and justice. Honourably associated with him were Fauchet, constitutional Bishop of Calvados, and Morisson, a *Vendéen* deputy. The chief exponents of the opposite view were Saint-Just, a young deputy who was at present a mere satellite of Robespierre but who afterwards became his right-hand man, and Robespierre himself. Their attitude was entirely logical; and Robespierre's speeches of November 30 and December 3 were, compared with the shifty and illogical reasoning of the Girondins, both cogent and consistent. The Convention were not judges, he said, nor was Louis accused; Louis was condemned on August 10; "*Le procès du tyran c'est l'insurrection, son jugement c'est la chute de sa puissance, sa peine celle qu'exige la liberté du peuple.*" If it was a mere matter of policy — and it seemed that it was so because on grounds of justice the proceedings could not be defended — then there was no need for a trial. "*Louis doit mourir parce qu'il faut que la patrie vive.*" Pressing his arguments to their logical conclusion, Robespierre demanded that sentence should be immediately passed without the formality of a trial. Louis must simply

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be killed as a matter of political expediency. The Convention indeed had no power to try him.

Meanwhile in the middle of these debates a sensational incident of some importance occurred. On November 20 Roland entered the hall and deposited on the *bureau* some bundles of papers. These, he said, were the contents of an iron press discovered that very morning in the Tuileries; a cursory inspection had shown him that they incriminated many members of the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies. This announcement threw the Convention into the utmost agitation; so many of its members had either touched Court gold or had offered to do so, that few felt safe. Roland was at once accused of tampering with the papers for his own benefit and that of his friends; but the main result of the incident was that men became eager to discount by the violence of their present republicanism the impending revelations of their past venality. Thus the discovery of the iron press became an important factor in sealing the fate of the King.

For all this, the majority of the Assembly shrank from adopting the revolting, if consistent, policy advocated by Robespierre and Saint-Just; and on December 3 it was decreed that Louis should be tried by the Convention. A Committee of Twenty-one was entrusted with the preparation of the counts of accusation.

The Gironde took advantage of the ensuing delay to propose a "*scrutin épuratoire*" of the Convention, by which the name of every deputy would be referred to his constituents in the primary assemblies. This would have been tantamount to an appeal to the people and was a deliberate attempt to avoid the responsibility of trying the King; but the weakness of the Gironde was by this time chronic, and, on some protests arising, Guadet withdrew the motion. On December 10 Robert Lindet reported for the Committee of Twenty-one; and on the following day the King was brought to the bar to hear the counts of his indictment.

From the date of his confinement in the Temple Louis had been subjected to every form of hardship and degradation, but had retained the calmness, forbearance, and devoutness, which were always his strongest characteristics. To be suddenly confronted, amidst every circumstance of contumely and insult, with a list of charges which, since he had received no copy of the indictment, came to him as a complete surprise, placed the King in a predicament with which his slow wits and unready tongue were little fitted to cope. He made no attempt to question the legality of his trial, and to most of the charges was content to give a simple denial. Chief among the counts of the indictment were: (1) complicity in Bouillé's so-called "plots against the nation," (2) payment of wages to emigrated body-guards, (3) favouring of and payment of money to *émigrés*, (4) buying up of corn and other monopolies, *i.e. accaparement*, (5) breach of his oath by attempting to reverse the Constitution. After denying these charges and expressing ignorance of all the papers save

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one in the iron press, the King asked for counsel to defend him, and, on this request being grudgingly granted, selected Target and Tronchet. The former declined, but Malesherbes was appointed at his own request; and he and Tronchet, aided by a younger advocate named Desèze, undertook the King's defence.

In the interval allowed for its preparation two skirmishes took place between the Mountain and the Gironde. On December 14 an attempt was made to regulate entrance to the galleries by insisting on the production of tickets. Later events showed that the adoption of this measure might have altered the result of the trial; but once more the courage of the Girondins oozed away, and the motion was tamely withdrawn. On the 16th a further quarrel arose over the motion of Buzot for the expulsion of all the Bourbons from France. This measure was expressly directed against Orleans; but once again the Girondins retreated and fatuously agreed to exempt the very man whom the measure had been designed to strike.

One other decree of the first importance, marking as it does a new departure in revolutionary politics, falls within this period. On November 19 the Convention had offered its protection to all nations struggling for freedom; but they had very soon found that with a depleted treasury it was impossible to undertake this mission gratuitously. Hence, on the report of Cambon, who had by this time become the trusted financial adviser of the Convention, it was decreed that the expenses of the wars of liberation should be transferred to the shoulders of the liberated countries. France thus ceased to be the volunteer, and became the mercenary of the cause of "freedom." But the decree of December 15 went further than this; it made "liberty" compulsory, and imposed the revolutionary nostrums of France on all the liberated countries. "*Malheur au peuple,*" said the report of Cambon, "*qui essaiera de s'affranchir s'il ne rompe au même instant toutes les chaînes.*" This decree was the manifesto of the war of conquest; and the "liberty" which it heralded was in fact an unmitigated tyranny.

But now on December 26 the hour arrived for the King's second appearance at the bar; and at 9 a.m., escorted by Santerre, Commandant of the National Guard, he entered the hall. Desèze at once commenced his speech for the defence. One by one the advocate refuted the charges against Louis, and then boldly accused the Convention of injustice and of prejudging the case. "I look round," he said, "for judges and I find accusers"; "you take away from Louis not only his prerogative as a King, but his rights as a citizen." There followed an eloquent appeal to the judgment of posterity. "History will judge your judgment, and hers will be the verdict of generations to come." On the conclusion of his counsel's address the King withdrew; and the Mountain cried out for immediate sentence of death. Lanjuinais with admirable *sang-froid* denounced the iniquity of such a proceeding, even

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entreating the Assembly to reconsider its determination to sit in judgment, since so many of them were personal enemies of the accused. "I and my friends," he added, "prefer to die rather than to condemn to death in violation of the law even the most abominable tyrant." Unfortunately, though Lanjuinais himself may certainly have preferred death to dishonour, he was wrong in thinking that his friends shared either his conscience or his courage.

After this the Convention gave itself over to a prolonged tumult, during which the fierce outcry for instant sentence was broken at rare intervals by protests from the few deputies who, in face of the threats of the Mountain and the clamour of the galleries, had any courage left. On December 28 Robespierre, in a speech which has been described as both smelling of oil and reeking of blood, returned to the theory of the *salut public*, denouncing the proposal that there should be a *referendum*, or appeal to the people, as the "rally-cry of royalism," and avowing, candidly enough, that it would mean the downfall of the Republic. On the other side Vergniaud eloquently urged the appeal to the people, and was supported by Brissot and Gensonné, of whom the former pleaded the disastrous effects on foreign relations of a precipitate sentence, and the latter made a bitter and satirical attack on Robespierre.

Up to this point there was nothing to indicate what would be the result of the division on this vital question of a *referendum*. On the whole it seemed probable that, in spite of the publicity of the voting, the violence of the spectators, and the agitation of the Assembly, the humanity and sense of justice of the majority would yet assert themselves. It was at this juncture that Barère rose, on January 3, to express the feeling of the Centre. In addition to his power, already noted, of seeing both sides of a question, Barère had an infallible intuition as to which way the wind was blowing, and an ingrained desire to sail with it. His facile and persuasive eloquence enabled him to gloss over the brutal violences of the Mountain with subtle and refined arguments appealing to the more fastidious taste of the Plain. Identifying himself with the Moderates by contemptuous references to Robespierre and Marat, he now proceeded to justify the policy of the very men whom he seemed to be denouncing, and by a totally different line of argument arrived at their conclusion, to wit, that the condemnation of Louis was not a matter of justice, but a great measure of public safety.

Barère's speech closed the debate. It left the Convention with three questions to decide: first, was Louis guilty: secondly, if guilty, what should be his punishment: and thirdly, should there be an appeal to the people. It was of the utmost importance to all who did not desire the King's death that the last of these three questions should be taken first; and, when the Girondins, yielding to the clamour of the galleries and to further specious arguments from Barère, agreed to take the question of guilt first, they went far to settle the fate of Louis.

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Of the result of this first vote there could be no doubt. The Girondins had from the outset made up their minds that they could not openly declare a belief in the King's innocence; while the Plain was in its usual plastic condition, and would follow the winning side. Meanwhile the Montagnards were not idle. They had found a useful ally in Pache, who in October had succeeded Servan as War Minister. Pache had been a *protégé* of Roland, by whose influence he had obtained the portfolio. No sooner, however, was he established in power than he deserted his patron and allied himself with the Mountain. Thenceforward, at a time when an efficient War Office was of the most vital importance, he was far more occupied in playing the game of the Jacobins in Paris than in organising or caring for the armies at the front. It was indeed to protest against the inefficiency of Pache, as well as against the decree of December 15 and *inter alia* to save the King, that Dumouriez on January 6 arrived in Paris. He remained there until the 26th without being able to get a hearing; and when he returned to his army he had lost his popularity and prestige, and from that time ceased to be a factor in the Revolution.

Through the influence of Pache the Jacobins were now able to get the regular troops removed from Paris; and at the same time they made attempts to gain over the *fédérés*, while by dark threats of further massacres the capital was once more reduced to a state of terror. The result was that of the 739 deputies, the large majority of whom certainly believed the King to be innocent, not one — not even Lanjuinais — could be found to say so in the *tribune*. The acme of courage was abstention, and only five deputies reached this pitch of valour. It should be noted that the simple voting of guilty or not guilty on the 34 charges *en bloc* was contrary to the principles of the Criminal Code of September 16–29, 1791, which had insisted on each charge being separately put to the jury. Amongst all the lawyers of the Convention not one was found to demand the observance of the forms of justice established by the Constituent.

Issue was now joined on the question of the *referendum*. With characteristic cowardice the Girondins had chosen this as the ground for their battle, for it would both save them from accusations of Royalism, and at the same time relieve them from the responsibility of pronouncing sentence. To the Jacobins on the other hand the *referendum* was even more distasteful than absolute acquittal. Any appeal to the people would, as they knew, and even had the candour to acknowledge, be the signal for their overthrow. The result of the vote, announced at 10 p.m. on January 15 by Vergniaud, who was in the chair, was disastrous. Only 284 of the 717 members present voted for, and 424 voted against it; the want of unity and leadership in the Gironde had once more shown itself. Of the 60 most prominent Girondins, thirteen, including Condorcet, Ducos, and Boyer-Fonfrède, had voted against the

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motion; and this internal division in the party had undermined their influence over the Plain.

Meanwhile, in view of the approaching vote on the penalty, the Mountain had been busy; and a determined effort had been made to foment disturbances in the capital. Once more the Sectional Assemblies became the centres of disorder. Inflammatory petitions poured in to the Assembly; incendiary mobs surrounded the barriers and the prisons; 132 pieces of cannon were handed over by Pache to Santerre. The Mayor himself complained to the Assembly of the dangerous condition of Paris, and pleaded that the armed force should be put under the control of the *Conseil exécutif*. Thus the Moderates of the Convention were made to feel not only that they were surrounded in the Convention by hostile and dangerous crowds, but that outside all was prepared for another *émeute*, even for another September, should the voting on the final question not commend itself to the Mountain.

Undismayed by these threats Lanjuinais moved that a two-thirds majority should be necessary to carry the death-penalty. Danton, newly returned from the front, marked his reappearance by securing the rejection of this proposal. The voting on the supreme question then began and continued for thirty-seven consecutive hours amidst circumstances of unparalleled disorder. An attempted intervention by the Spanish ambassador — the second he had made during the trial — was swept aside; and at last the result was proclaimed. Of 749 members, 28 were absent; 321 had voted for penalties other than death, mostly for imprisonment, but two, of whom one was Condorcet, for the galleys; 26 in voting death had demanded a debate on the postponement of the sentence; 13 had made postponement a condition of their vote for death; and 361, that is an absolute majority of 1, had voted for death.

In view of the narrowness of this majority, the Moderates were encouraged to take a further vote on the question of a respite; and on January 19, on the proposal of Buzot, the Convention embarked on its fourth and last *appel nominal*. But by this time the Gironde was thoroughly demoralised, and the leader of the opposition to Buzot's motion was the Girondin Barbaroux. Thus the respite, although Buzot, Brissot, Louvet, Valazé and Biroteau voted in favour of it, was defeated by 380 votes to 310, not however before Manuel had, with conspicuous courage, tendered his resignation on the ground that he had been assaulted within the Assembly in consequence of his vote. When we remember that Manuel, as *Procureur* of the Commune, had actually been present in the prisons during the September massacres, it is certainly surprising to find him courting death in a courageous attempt to save the King. He eventually lost his head for refusing to give evidence against the Queen, and his conduct indicates a strange alternation of violence and compunction.

The motion for respite having been lost, the execution was now fixed

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for the following day. The King was granted a confessor; and the Assembly voted that the French nation should take his family into their care—a decision which probably disturbed the King far more than his own approaching end. Louis had indeed long given himself up for lost, and met the announcement of his sentence with composure. After a painful farewell with his family, he spent the remainder of his time with his confessor, the Abbé Edgeworth. On the morning of the 21st he was driven in the company of Santerre and Garat to the Place de la Révolution. Although there were rumours of plots to save him, one in particular organised by the Baron de Batz, and although the attitude of the crowd was on the whole sympathetic, the Jacobins managed everything so well that no incident occurred. Louis' behaviour on the scaffold was marked by perfect composure and piety. His attempt to address the crowd was cut short by the roll of drums. At 10.20 a.m. on January 21, 1793, his head was held up to the crowd by Sanson the executioner; and another epoch of the Revolution was over.

Responsibility for the fatal result of the King's trial must be distributed between the Mountain, the Plain, and the Gironde. Of these the attitude of the first was the most logical as it was the least cowardly; the Mountain avowedly desired the King's death as a measure of political expediency; that they identified the safety of the body politic with their own continuance in power need provoke no surprise; they were honestly and openly in favour of instant death.

Far other was the position of the Gironde. At the beginning of the trial it is probable that not a single Girondin either desired or anticipated the King's death; but they had once more determined to sacrifice principle in order to secure popularity. They could not see that the time had now come when the chasm between the *bourgeoisie* and the proletariate could no longer be concealed; nor had they perhaps sufficient political acumen to see that by their condonation of the Jacobin policy they really stood to lose and not to gain popularity. It cannot be denied that the power to save the King had lain in the hands of the Gironde; they still predominated in the Convention—witness the continued presence of their candidates in the chair and at the secretarial *bureau*, witness also the Girondist tone of the various committees. But they had long lost the power to use their majority; and during the trial their faults of character worked upon their faults of discipline and organisation, as the division lists prove. It is difficult to characterise the votes of some of the Girondins (*e.g.* those against death, but also against respite) as anything but the doubling of hunted animals; but the considerable amount of cross-voting, which not only destroyed the consistency of the Gironde, but also undermined the confidence of the Plain, shows, in addition to cowardice, a radical want of party discipline.

As to the Plain, the individual members revolted from the idea of so needless a crime and looked appealingly to the Gironde for leadership.

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But, as we have seen, all the lead they got was from Barère. He, no doubt, if he had been satisfied that the Gironde would vote solid, would have declared himself for them; but his unfailing sagacity had shown him that the Gironde was not a winning party; he foresaw the victory of the Mountain; and it was not in his character to put himself into opposition to any party which was likely to come into power, least of all to a party so well armed and so unscrupulous as the Mountain. Barère knew that the success of the Mountain would be the signal for a general proscription of their opponents; and, whoever was to be proscribed, he was determined to be safe. The cunning with which he carried the votes of the Plain to the side of the Mountain has already been noticed. If the Mountain is convicted of brutality and the Gironde of selfish cowardice, the Plain cannot be absolved from the accusation of both weakness and criminal opportunism.

The tragic events which have just been narrated did not at once affect the balance of parties. The death of Louis had certainly been a victory for the Jacobins; but it remained to be seen whether they would be able to reap its fruits. As to the Girondins, their attitude during the trial had destroyed their cohesion within the Assembly and their influence without; but they were still, just as the *Feuillants* had been up to the very end of the Legislative, in command of a majority in the Convention; and outside, in spite of their loss of prestige, a firm stand for the maintenance of order and property would have ensured to them the support of a Moderate majority, even in Paris itself. During the early months of 1793 indeed the Moderates were greatly in the ascendant in the capital; and there was still a considerable force of *fédérés* in the city. The anarchical policy of the Jacobins and the brutality of Marat and Hébert had alienated the great *bourgeois* class. In fact, by this time everyone who had any property was a Moderate. In spite, therefore, of their discomfiture over the King's trial, the prospects of the Girondins in the spring of 1793 seemed by no means black; what they lacked was not supporters, but the power to organise their supporters and the active courage to strike down their adversaries with the weapons which they undoubtedly held. Their opponents, however, were not without arms of their own for the coming struggle. Within the Convention itself they had the potent influence of the galleries and the fear inspired by the murderous record of Marat; while in Paris the two great clubs, Cordeliers and Jacobins, were theirs, and the Commune, and with it the National Guard, were subject to their influence.

Confronted with a life and death struggle at home, the Girondins had to meet an increasingly alarming situation on the frontiers. The death of Louis was the signal for war with England, Holland, and Spain. It also heralded a general repulse of French arms at all the seats of war. For guidance in this double crisis the Gironde had to rely on the weakest Ministry that had held office since 1789. The War Office

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passed on February 3 from the incapable and dishonest hands of Pache into those of Beurnonville, equally incapable, though more honest. Roland resigned on January 23; and his departure took away such backbone as the Ministry possessed, and implied the abandonment by the Girondins of the idea of governing through a ministry at all. Roland's successor, Garat, was of all men the most incapable; a man of letters not of affairs, of theory not of practice, he was content to contemplate events which he was intended to control. It was a culminating misfortune for the Gironde that at this critical juncture in their fortunes authority in the capital should have fallen into such hands. Lebrun, at the Foreign Office, brought a certain amount of reason and intelligence to the conduct of foreign affairs; but Clavière was anything but a sound finance minister. The fact was that, with the passing of Danton and Roland from the Ministry, the disastrous effects of the exclusion of deputies from the Cabinet again came to light; and the Convention returned to the experiment of a Central Committee to co-ordinate the work of the numerous special Committees, and to assist — not yet to override — Ministers. Such a Committee had already several times been constituted during the many periods when weak Ministers had held office, but had each time disappeared as soon as the Ministry received any renewal of strength. Thus a Committee of Twelve had been appointed on March 9, 1792, at the moment of Narbonne's resignation, but had effaced itself before the Brissotin Ministry, which came into office a few days later, only to be reorganised on June 18 as the Committee of Twenty-one, after the fall of that Ministry on June 12. Each increase of members having increased its Jacobinism, the Committee had displayed great activity during the August crisis. After August 10 its members were increased to 25, but it had once more effaced itself before the Ministry of Danton; and only now after Roland's retirement did it become necessary to reorganize it afresh. On January 4, 1793, it was renewed as the "*Comité de Défense Générale.*" Numbering as it did twenty-five members, it was very unwieldy; and, as it was open to all deputies to speak, though not to vote, at the debates, it fell into a condition of weakness and disorder.

It now became a question whether the Gironde would be able to find other resources with which to face its enemies at home and the Allies on the frontier. Aid seemed likely to come from one most efficient quarter. Danton, during the critical months of the previous autumn, had given proof of his superlative force and ability as an administrator; since that time he had been gaining experience on missions to the armies. What he had seen of warfare, however, had given him food for reflexion. It was he who had been largely responsible for giving to the war its colossal scope, who had conjured up the dream of "natural frontiers," who had thundered against all kings, and offered the fellowship of France to all nations struggling for freedom. The promulgation of such grandiose

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ideas had probably been to him but a device for provoking enthusiasm. He was ever unscrupulous of means, he was not a man of theories, and, if he had ever believed in his own programme, he at any rate never felt bound by any rule of consistency; with his eyes on the future, he was ever ready to break with the past. Whether experience and contact with war really altered his views, or whether his formulae had only been adopted to serve a temporary purpose, he was now in the early days of 1793 convinced of the necessity for giving fixity to the Revolution, and of the hopelessness of continuing a revolutionary crusade against the Powers of Europe on the lines laid down by the decree of December 15, 1792. Determined on a policy of settlement at home and alliances abroad, he began to look round for the nucleus of a new party wherewith to carry out his designs. Both expediency and his own tastes pointed to the Gironde. That party still held a majority in the Convention and still, as compared with its rivals, might commend itself to the people of France. Danton's powerful personality might weld the party together, galvanise the paralysed majority into life, and use it for the restoration of order at home and the introduction of reason into foreign relations.

But the Girondins, in addition to a certain conceited rigidity of temperament which forbade their entering into relations with men who had once been opponents, were quite unwilling to accept the domination of Danton, of whose masterful character they had already had experience. They had been fighting all along for power for themselves and were not prepared to hand that power, or any part of it, to an outsider. Accordingly, when Danton offered his alliance, they drew back from him with jealous suspicion. This rebuff threw Danton on his own resources. Unscrupulous as he was, he must have shrunk from a fresh alliance with the Jacobins. Yet what alternative was open to him? Only by their aid could he establish the strong government that he required. But his association with the Mountain gave to that party just the access of strength which enabled it to wrest from him the weapons of his own forging, to turn them to his destruction, and set up the Terror which those weapons had been designed to prevent.

During the month of February the lists were being cleared for the great struggle. The Gironde fulminated against the Mountain, and the Mountain plotted against the Gironde. It was not until the following month that the reverses to French arms put a new and fruitful opportunity into the hands of the Jacobins. During February they had to make as much capital as they could out of the cry of famine. By means of the armed bands which were now organised on a permanent footing under the directions of the notorious Maillard, and through the Sectional Committees, aided also by Pache, who, on leaving the War Office, had been elected Mayor of Paris, they raised a series of alarming bread riots and got threatening petitions introduced into the Convention. By such means they extorted from the public treasury large grants of

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money, ostensibly for the purpose of feeding the capital, and also created that outcry for a *maximum*, or fixed price for bread and other necessaries, which afterwards came to a head in April. The Convention, during these latter days of February, was engaged on the report of its Constitutional Committee, which had been presented by Condorcet on February 15. The Constitution proposed by the Committee was Girondist in tone and closely modelled on the lines of the Constitution of 1791; it did not commend itself to the Jacobins and was never passed into law.

Meanwhile the Commune and the Jacobin and Cordeliers' Clubs were busily plotting the downfall of their opponents; and in the early days of March an informal Committee of Insurrection, which included such desperadoes as Collot, Guzman, Desfieux, Proly, Lazowski, and possibly Tallien, began to meet at the Café Corazza. The existence of this Committee seems to have been a matter of general knowledge; but the authorities were too weak or too stupid to take any cognisance of it. Events at the front played rapidly into the hands of the conspirators. On March 5 arrived the serious news that Aix-la-Chapelle had fallen, and that the siege of Maestricht had been raised. From the west there came news even more alarming. For some time past the retired country, immediately south of the estuary of the Loire, had been much agitated by the course of the Revolution. The affected area varied greatly in social and geographical character; its geographical centre, the centre also of disaffection, was the large upland region lying along both banks of the Sèvre-Nantaise. This region, far from being mountainous, can hardly even be called hilly, its highest point being no more than 900 feet above sea-level. It spreads in pleasant but featureless undulations over some 400,000 acres. A cattle-rearing district, divided into innumerable small enclosures, tilled by small farmers holding for the most part from resident landowners, it took its name of the Bocage as well from the wealth of high hedgerows crowded with hedgerow timber which gave it the appearance of a vast rolling woodland, as from the frequent small forests and the impenetrable scrub with which the pasturage was interspersed. With a thick population its towns were few and small; chief among them were Châtillon, Les Herbiers, La Châtaigneraie, Saint-Fulgent, Clisson, Tiffauges, and Montaigu.

Below and around this irregular, pear-shaped, upland district lay a wider, flatter country, where a larger and more elaborate tillage, including the cultivation of vines, was practised, and whose inhabitants were more in touch with the rest of France. This Plaine formed a complete circle round the Bocage, but the marches between the two were extremely ill-defined.

Westward between the Plaine and the Atlantic lay a district of yet another character, a strange area of land reclaimed from the sea. This country was divided by a wedge of the Plaine, which penetrated to the coast of Les Sables d'Olonne, into two parts, one extending round the

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mouth of the Loire and the other round that of the Sèvre-Nantaise. Fertile to a high degree, the "Marais" was intersected by a network of ditches and canals so elaborate as to make locomotion a fine art and in winter impossible save in boats, conditions which rendered military operations a matter of extreme difficulty.

By the inhabitants of these retired districts the abolition of feudalism was greeted with but slight enthusiasm, for their feudal relations with the resident *seigneurs* left little to be desired. It would be untrue, however, to say that there was any resistance to the changes. Active opposition was only provoked when the Legislative Assembly commenced its persecution of the priests and *émigrés*. The measures against the clergy in particular provoked widespread discontent amongst a people religious to the point of fanaticism; the downfall of the throne enhanced the discontent; and after August 10 the malcontents were provided with the double cry of "Church" and "Crown." By the spring of 1793 the whole countryside was on the verge of insurrection; and the decree of February 23, which imposed the ballot for the army on the whole of France, only set a match to a train which had long been laid.

The insurrection broke out simultaneously and spontaneously among the peasantry of the Marais and those of the Bocage. Cathelineau, a poor hawker of woollen goods, took the lead in the latter; and Gaston, a barber, in the former — sufficient proof that the insurrection was not fomented by the *seigneurs*; but no sooner had the peasants risen than they turned to their *seigneurs* to lead them, and these nobly responded to the appeal. Charette, a retired naval lieutenant and a resident proprietor in the Marais, assumed the command in that district; Bonchamps, a *seigneur* residing near Saint-Florent, a man of extreme courage and military ability, and d'Elbée, a retired cavalry officer, residing on his property near Beaupréau, became the organising spirits of the insurrectionaries of the Bocage. With them were associated Cathelineau and a gamekeeper named Stofflet; and they were soon joined by a whole host of brave and devoted colleagues. No army perhaps before or since could boast of more heroic leaders than this rabble of peasants which now set its face against the full tide of the Revolution; to read the exploits of de Lescure, Henri de La Rochejaquelein, Charette, Stofflet, Cathelineau, and Bonchamps, is to understand, in part at any rate, the reasons for the success which attended the insurrection.

At first the rebels, opposed only by the raw levies from the surrounding districts and the National Guards of the country towns, carried all before them; Les Herbiers, Montaigu, Chantonnay, Cholet, and Vihiers all quickly fell into their hands; and by the end of March, after a decisive victory at Graverau, which placed Fontenay, Luçon, and Niort, towns of the southern and western Plaine, at their mercy, the insurgents were masters of all the towns of the Bocage, and had

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even pushed out into the Plaine; while in the Marais Challans and Noirmoutier were occupied by Charette, whose victorious career was only checked by the obstinate resistance of Les Sables d'Olonne.

The news of this formidable rebellion was now beginning to reach Paris; coupled with the news of disasters on the eastern frontier, it was indeed serious. Few but the rawest troops were available for service in the west, and these preliminary successes made the insurgents daily more formidable. The Republic, therefore, found itself in the month of March in a most perilous position. France's extremity became once more the Jacobins' opportunity, and they hastened to use for their own ends the consternation which the news created; but their attempt to clear Paris for fresh insurrections by getting the *fédérés* sent to the front was only partially successful, and their demands for a Revolutionary Tribunal were temporarily rejected.

On March 8 Danton and Lacroix arrived in Paris from their mission to the armies, and hurried to the Assembly to report on the situation. Danton had returned from the disorganised armies more convinced than ever of the necessity for establishing a strong conciliatory government. By this time he almost despaired of persuading the Gironde to co-operate with him; yet he gave them one more chance, proposing on March 8 that the Ministry should be opened to members of the Convention. The Gironde were foolish enough to reject this measure, which would have allowed them to participate in the strong government; their pique against Danton blinded them to their own welfare. On the same day Danton, while courageously and characteristically defending Dumouriez and rightly blaming the War Office for the failure of the French arms, set on foot measures for raising volunteers in Paris by means of Commissioners sent by the Convention to every Section. Patriotism thus satisfied, the Convention gave itself over to party jealousies. The old September cry, "To the front, but leave no traitors behind," was renewed; but an attempt to rouse the Sections in favour of a new Revolutionary Tribunal did not succeed. Undaunted, however, by this failure, the Jacobin Club published on March 9 an incendiary manifesto with the object of raising the mob against the Girondins in the Convention. But even this fell flat. A mob, however, did collect; the War Minister and Pétion were hustled, and the Girondin printing-presses were broken up. Advantage was taken of the tumult to secure the creation of a *Tribunal Criminel extraordinaire*. A useful prototype existed in the Extraordinary Tribunal created on August 17, 1792, which however had been suppressed on November 29, 1792; it was now revived and a similar Tribunal was constituted on March 29, 1793, limited at first, as the August Tribunal had been in scope, and controlled by a supervisory committee of six *Conventionnels*. The Insurrectionary Committee now appealed to the Cordeliers, and these gladly called upon the authorities of Paris to arrest "the traitorous *Conventionnels*"; but

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the Commune held back, and the Girondins, warned perhaps by Danton, kept away from the evening sitting, and a shower of rain, coinciding with the appearance of a body of *fédérés*, dispersed the rioters. This conspiracy, known as the "*Conjuration du 9 Mars*," had failed in its main object, but had established the first of the great instruments which were to put all power into the hands of the Jacobins — the Revolutionary Tribunal.

Events on the frontier now once again supplied the necessary incentive. The outbreak of revolt in the Vendée coincided with the defeat of Dumouriez at Neerwinden (March 18); and at the same time the disaffection in Lyons, Marseilles, and Normandy came to a head. Neerwinden, and the news of the establishment of the Revolutionary Tribunal, determined Dumouriez to turn his arms against the Convention. He had for long been at variance with the government, and had on March 12 addressed to them a letter of remonstrance couched in very threatening terms. He now felt that, in the hands of the new Tribunal, this letter might cost him his head. He thus stood committed to resistance to the new order of things; and, although Danton and Lacroix, who interviewed him on the day after the battle, succeeded in extracting from him a semi-retractation of the letter, they returned to Paris more than doubtful of his attitude. Their suspicions were, indeed, not erroneous, for on March 23 Dumouriez entered into negociations with Coburg; and on March 27, in an interview with three Commissioners sent by the Convention to revolutionise Holland, he denounced the Convention as "300 scoundrels and 400 imbeciles," and declared his intention of starving out Paris by blocking the rivers and stopping supplies. With these evidences of treason the Commissioners hurried to Paris. Meanwhile the *Comité de Défense Générale* had thought it advisable not to reveal the contents of Dumouriez' violent letter, and Danton and Lacroix also concealed their suspicions of the general. Paris, therefore, though agitated and suspicious, was ignorant of the true gravity of the situation; and the publication of the letter in the *Moniteur* of March 25 came like a thunderbolt to the city.

It was at once seen that the existing government was unequal to the crisis; and increased powers were given to the *Comité de Défense Générale*, which, however, remained unwieldy in form, and, in spite of the inclusion of Danton and Robespierre, Girondist in tone. It was thus not what Danton required; but, such as it was, it commenced on March 25 to sit *en permanence*. The series of calamities to French arms provoked the Jacobins to propose, and the Girondins to submit to, a corresponding series of vigorous revolutionary measures, and each military reverse had its prompt legislative echo. Thus the evacuation of Aix heralded the establishment of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and the despatch of *Représentants en mission* to each Department, to

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complete the levy of 300,000 men. The outbreak of revolt in La Vendée (March 14) provoked the outlawry of the rebels on the 19th, and the creation, on the 21st, of *Comités de Surveillance* in every Commune. The defeat of Neerwinden and the defection of Dumouriez were responsible for the reorganisation of the *Comité de Défense Générale*, for the rescinding on April 1 of the law which guaranteed the inviolability of deputies, for a law of the same date authorising Commissioners of the Convention to arrest suspects, and for the creation on April 4 of an army of *sansculottes* for home use.

During the last days of March the ferment in Paris was considerable. On the 27th a fresh Committee of Insurrection was formed, this time at the Archevêché, drawing its members from the Sections and enjoying the official sanction of the Commune. On the 30th a climax was reached on the arrival of the three Commissioners to whom Dumouriez had been so candid; their news left no doubt of the general's treason, and men set their teeth to meet the emergency.

In the first place the War Minister, Beurnonville, with four other Commissioners, was despatched to Dumouriez' camp; and their arrival forced his hand. Failing to carry the soldiers with him, he deserted to the Austrians on April 4. Dumouriez' *coup d'état* had failed; but Paris was as yet ignorant of the result, and Danton was using the agitation of the capital to secure the establishment of the second item of the strong government which he required. Once again the Gironde played into the hands of their opponents; instead of attempting to govern through the *Comité de Défense Générale* which they controlled, they were themselves the first to clamour for its replacement by a Committee of nine. Thus on April 6 was established the first Committee of Public Safety, with powers to deliberate in secret and to override Ministers, and with 100,000 *livres* of secret service money for the month to which its operations were at first restricted.

It is difficult to see what benefit the Gironde hoped to derive from this measure, yet Buzot alone of the Girondins resisted it. It is possible that they expected to control the new Committee as they had controlled the old; if so they were very soon undeceived, for no single Girondin found a seat on it. The successful candidates were Barère, Delmas, Bréard, Cambon, Danton, Guyton-Morveau, Treilhard, Lacroix, and Robert Lindet, of whom Lacroix and Guyton-Morveau were thoroughgoing Dantonists, while the remainder were compliant members of the Centre. The Gironde had forgotten the supreme fact that Danton was now against them. It was their own fault that it was so; Danton had made repeated overtures, every one of which they had rejected. Finally on April 1 Lasource had accused him of complicity with Dumouriez and of aspiring to a dictatorship. Danton was thus driven into an alliance with the extremists, and to secure their support was obliged to pander to their anarchic and predatory policy, to which he was at heart opposed.

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With his support three items of this policy were quickly decreed — although in principle only — the formation of an "army of *sansculottes*," the regulation of the price of bread, and the progressive taxation of the rich. New powers were at the same time granted to the *Représentants en mission*, and the action of the *Tribunal Criminel extraordinaire*, now called the Revolutionary Tribunal, was expedited by the abolition of the Supervisory Committee, which had hitherto controlled its actions, and the increase of the power of the Public Prosecutor. At the same time the Commune was quite irregularly allowed to co-opt a hundred new members, which gave it a much needed demagogic reinforcement.

The strife of parties now continued under fresh conditions. The Gironde was driven to try its strength against the combined forces of Dantonists and extreme Jacobins. The first effort of the latter was directed against the Provinces. For months the Provinces had been held as a threat over their heads; and they had not spared to retort on the Girondins a general charge of favouring the Provinces at the expense of the capital, a charge which under the vague name of "Federalism" was eventually to prove ruinous to the Gironde. There was so much truth in it, that Buzot and the Rolands were notorious admirers of the American system of federal government and had talked about it as an ideal even for France. At each election also the Provinces had favoured the reactionaries; the Jacobins were resolved that this should cease; and in the *Représentants en mission* they held an admirable device with which to bring it to an end.

The system of missions of deputies, which had not been unknown in the Constituent and had been extensively employed by the Legislative, especially after August 10, to secure the establishment of the provisional government, had been greatly extended by the Convention; and on March 9, 1793, Commissioners had been appointed to go to every Department to promote the levy of 300,000 men which had been decreed on February 23. The Commissioners on April 4 took the title of *Représentants en mission*. Great care was exercised in their choice, and they went out with the double object of raising the recruits and of subjecting the Provinces to the Jacobin domination. Needless to say it was to the latter object that they gave most of their attention. Everywhere the most arbitrary measures were enforced; the local Jacobin clubs were raised into legal authorities and the proletariate invited to pillage; all this, be it noted, no longer in the name of the Commune or the Jacobins, but in that of the Convention itself. The result was that by the end of April all France, save only Lyons, the Vendée, Marseilles, Bordeaux, and Rouen, had not only provided its quota of recruits, but had submitted to the domination of the Jacobins.

Seeing that the war had been carried into their camp, the Girondins determined to retaliate; and the absence on mission of so many of the

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extremists left them in an assured majority in the Convention. On April 8, 9, and 10, some of the Sections had petitioned in favour of the purging of the Convention; and Robespierre renewed accusations, which he had already made on April 3, that the Girondins had conspired with Dumouriez to restore the monarchy. On the 10th and 12th Vergniaud and Guadet retaliated, charging their opponents in turn with plotting an Orleanist restoration. Inspired by their own eloquence the Girondists on April 13 proceeded to drag Marat before the Revolutionary Tribunal for incendiary articles published in *L'Ami du Peuple*. Marat's friends in the Sections replied by demanding on April 15 under the aegis of the Commune the ostracism of twenty-two Girondist deputies. Neither blow went home; the Sections' proposal was rejected on April 20; and on April 24, Marat, whose trial had been a mere farce, was acquitted. His accusation indeed had been a blunder, for he was the least dangerous of the Girondins' enemies, and his trial only served to bring him a popularity which he had not before possessed.

The Jacobins now set to work to establish the first of their new measures. The idea of enforcing a uniform price, or *maximum* as it was called, for bread and other necessaries was not a new one; it had been hinted at by Saint-Just on November 20, 1792, had been petitioned for by the Commune on April 18, 1793, and had already been decreed in principle. A practical uniformity in the price of bread in Paris had been established by the *Conseil exécutif* in the previous September, when, to enable Roland to keep the price at three *sous* a pound, the Convention had voted a grant of 20,000,000 *livres*. Between that time and the following May the Commune had spent on an average 12,000 *livres* a day in keeping prices down. Now on May 3 the principle was extended, though still for corn only, to the whole of France. Each Department was to have its table of prices, varying according to local conditions. This measure was as much a weapon of terror as a concession to the predatory desires of the extremists, and, combined with the prominence which accrued to Marat after his acquittal, threw all owners of property, however small, into a state of anxiety and caused a wave of reaction against the extremists. Added to this anxiety for the safety of property there was a fear lest a new September should endanger men's personal safety, for the talk of "leaving no aristocrat behind" was again revived during the recruiting for the Vendée, and the actions of the Commune began suspiciously to resemble their actions prior to the massacres. On May 12 and 13 it decreed the formation of a "sans-culottic" army to watch over Paris, and entrusted the Mayor with the duty of disarming and arresting suspects. At the same time a fresh Committee of Insurrection began to sit at the Mairie, presided over by the police authorities and patronised by Pache himself. On May 19 and 20 this Committee proposed the drawing up of lists of suspects, and the ostracism of thirty-two Girondist deputies. It is probable that

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another massacre was designed, though possibly use would have been made of the Revolutionary Tribunal.

Confronted with a crisis so terrible and so imminent, the Girondins determined to take the bull by the horns. The Convention must shake off at whatever cost the domination of Paris and vindicate its own supremacy. They proposed therefore the breaking of the authorities of Paris, and the assembling at Bourges of the "*suppléants*" of the Convention, who, to the number of 298, had been elected in September, 1792, to fill vacancies in the deputations. Now, in the event of the destruction of the Convention, its functions would, according to the motion of Guadet, at once be taken up by the *suppléants* thus assembled as a kind of reserve Assembly. The Mountain was saved from a blow, which would have been fatal, only by the interference of Barère, who persuaded the Gironde to be content with the appointment of a Committee to investigate the recent acts of the Sections and the Commune, and to protect the Convention from conspiracies. This *Commission de Douze* was formed on May 18; it drew its members from the lower ranks of the Gironde, the most prominent being Rabaut-Saint-Étienne.

With this inadequate weapon the Gironde embarked on the final phase of its struggle with the Mountain: the Committee, reporting on May 24, recommended the reopening of the National Guard to Moderates and the appointment of a Moderate *Commandant*, and suggested also the regulation of the Section meetings, whose sittings should not be prolonged after 10 p.m. The character of the advice thus given shows how weak the Committee was; for it imposed no penalties and left the control of the National Guard in the hands of the Commune, whereas the first steps to the restoration of order and security should have been the complete suppression of the Commune.

The Committee however was not of a calibre to take so bold a step and was content with denouncing the Insurrectionary Committee at the Mairie. On May 24, however, it went so far as to arrest Hébert, the deputy *Procureur Substitut* of the Commune, for an incendiary article in his journal *Le Père Duchesne*. It also demanded the production of the minutes of the Section meetings, and, on the refusal of the *Cité* Section, arrested its president, Dobsen. In these actions the Committee made a double mistake; in the first place, in striking at the Committee at the Mairie they mistook their adversary; for on May 20 Pache had drawn back from the responsibility, and the focus of insurrection had once more been transferred to the more informal, but in other respects identical, *Comité central des commissaires des sections*, whose activity in the month of March has already been noticed, and whose eighty members were still sitting at the Archevêché. It was at this body and at the Cordeliers' Club, now far more incendiary than the Jacobins, that the Committee should have struck. In the second place, in the arrest of Hébert and

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Dobsen, the Committee repeated the blunder that had been made in the case of Marat; to proscribe individual leaders was to give a rallying point to the faction. Besides, Hébert's course and violent humour appealed directly to the rabble, and *Le Père Duchesne* was popular in a sense in which Marat's *L'Ami du Peuple* had never been, so that Hébert's arrest provoked a considerable outcry.

Battle was now joined between the Commune, backed by the majority of the Sections, and the Committee of Twelve, backed by the remainder of the Sections and a wavering majority of the Convention. Between the two opposing parties lay the Committee of Public Safety in a curiously double frame of mind, decided, that is, that the elimination of the Girondins was essential, yet willing to save their lives, and in particular anxious to save the convention from any encroachment on the part of the Commune. This latter body now cried out loudly for the release of Hébert; and this provoked the Girondin Isnard to an indiscretion, the most flagrant of which even the Gironde had ever been guilty. In a furious speech on May 25 he prophesied that, were the Convention injured, Paris would be annihilated. It was a suggestion of civil war as well as an echo of the threats of Brunswick; and it did untold harm to his party, alienating large classes of moderate men, who regarded it as a menace to their lives and properties. On May 26 the Commune seized the opportunity to demand the dissolution of the Committee of Twelve. The Committee had just ordered a body of National Guards to protect the Convention; and Garat, the Minister of the Interior, who regarded this precaution as a slight on his administration, reassured the Convention by declaring that the danger was a dream of the Twelve Committeemen. The ground was thus cut away below the feet of the Committee, and it was abolished on May 27, only however to be re-established on May 28 on the motion of the ever-courageous Lanjuinais.

But the triumph of the Gironde was ephemeral. They were obliged to release Hébert, Dobsen, and their other prisoners; and they dared not strike at the Insurrectionary Committee at the Archevêché, which on May 30 declared itself *en permanence*, and, having appointed on May 28 a secret committee of six with the liberated Dobsen at its head, hastened to bring matters to a crisis. Collecting at the Archevêché 500 citizens to form a semblance of an electoral body, they declared the Commune abolished — a step which significantly recalled August 10 — and themselves to be the new municipality. But, having turned out the old body, they at once co-opted it, so that the result of these proceedings was simply the addition of 96 greater ruffians to the Commune.

Thus renovated, the Commune proceeded, in face of the decree of the Convention, to appoint Hanriot, an ex-*massacreur*, Commandant of the National Guard, after which all was ready for the attack. On May 31, at 7 a.m., the Convention, which, it must be noted, had moved on May 10 from the *Manège* to the Tuileries, was surrounded by a mob

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which during the day increased to about 30,000. A large number were no doubt drawn by mere curiosity and had by no means come with the idea of purging the Convention; but a small nucleus, under the direct command of Hanriot, were determined to secure the proscription of the Girondins at all costs. In face of this force, Garat was powerless, and tried to shift the responsibility for the outbreak on to the shoulders of the Committee of Twelve. Others, more courageous, demanded the arrest of Hanriot; but the Girondins, with certain inconspicuous exceptions, tried each man to save himself by yielding to the violence of the Jacobins; and Vergniaud was content to propose the weak and meaningless motion "that the Sections have deserved well of the *patrie*." Then the crowd streamed into the Tuileries, demanding the arrest of the Girondists and the dissolution of the Committee of Twelve. When therefore Barère proposed in the name of the Committee of Public Safety, which, busied with the national defence, had declined to commit itself to either side, that the Committee of Twelve be dissolved, but that at the same time the armed force be placed on a permanent footing, the Girondists were glad enough to accept the compromise. Thus at the instance of the Committee of Public Safety the greatest obstacle to the *coup d'état* was removed.

The Mountain were now able to force two other measures upon the dazed Assembly — the payment of 40 *sous* a day to all *sansculottes* who remained under arms, and the reopening of the Tuileries to the public; while the Commune arrested Madame Roland and decreed the disarming of suspects. By the evening of May 31 the insurrectionaries had half won their battle and had secured the weapons necessary for the accomplishment of the other half.

The following day passed quietly, but its incidents shed light on the attitude of the Committee of Public Safety. Pache, the Mayor, in a report to that body acknowledged the existence of an insurrectionary committee; but the Committee of Public Safety abstained from action. It was in fact temporising; it welcomed the purging of the Convention, though, influenced by Danton, it desired to save the lives of the Girondists, and, being itself the child of the Convention, wished to protect the parent body from encroachments. In the afternoon the Girondists met, and talked of flight and of an appeal to the departments. At a special evening sitting of the Convention a demand from the Commune for the arrest of twenty-seven deputies was referred to the Committee of Public Safety.

During the night the Convention was again surrounded by armed men under Hanriot; and in the early hours of Sunday morning, June 2, a large crowd of spectators assembled to see what would happen. Bad news from the Vendée and Lyons caused some disaffection among the populace, but generally speaking their attitude was one of indifference. The Convention was now in a curious position; most of the Girondists

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had thrown down their arms and retired to their own houses, fearing to face their enemies, and had left their defence to Lanjuinais, who was not a Girondist at all, but who, by his courageous attitude and their desertion, got himself proscribed with them; yet even so the Convention was unwilling to decree their arrest. But it was surrounded by an armed mob, led by a desperate and half-intoxicated cut-throat. In this predicament a characteristic solution of the dilemma was propounded by Barère in the name of the Committee of Public Safety. He suggested that it would be more convenient if the threatened deputies would kindly proscribe themselves. This absurd and cowardly expedient was rejected with scorn by Lanjuinais and Barbaroux; but the few other Girondists, who had had the courage to attend, including Isnard and Fauchet, hastened to accept the suggestion.

When this self-elimination of the Gironde had been secured, the insurrection had gone far enough for the Committee of Public Safety; and they now threw their weight into the other side of the scale, and, denouncing the Committee of Insurrection, urged the Convention to break up its sitting. Hérault, therefore, who was in the chair, made his way down to the Place du Carrousel at the head of the deputies; there he was confronted by Hanriot, who, on being ordered to remove his guns, with drunken courage gave the command for the gunners to stand to their pieces. Onlookers afterwards said that, when the guns were pointed at the Convention, many muskets were levelled at Hanriot and his men from the crowd; but the argument of powder and shot was ever persuasive with the revolutionaries, and, in face of Hanriot's threatening attitude, the deputies slunk away through the Tuileries and across the gardens, only to find the swing-bridge, that led out on to the Place de la Révolution, guarded by an equally resolute *sansculotte*.

Headed by Marat, who had assumed the conduct of an affair so congenial, they returned to their hall, and, utterly cowed, degraded, and ashamed, voted the suspension of twenty deputies, two Ministers (Clavière and Lebrun), and of ten of the Committee of Twelve. At 11 p.m. the Convention — after a sitting of twelve hours — was at length permitted to break up by its new master, the Mob.

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CHAPTER X

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF PITT TO THE OUTBREAK OF WAR WITH FRANCE

THE War of Independence, which terminated in 1783 by the recognition of the United States in the Treaty of Versailles, had left England without a friend in Europe. France, Spain, and the United Provinces had taken up arms against her; Russia had placed herself at the head of an armed neutrality, directed against the predominance of British sea power, which was joined by the maritime nations of the north. Austria was in close connexion with Russia; and Prussia, in the declining years of Frederick the Great, was an uncertain factor in European politics. England therefore was in a condition of entire isolation. In addition her finances were in confusion; and Ireland, although conciliated by the comparative independence of Grattan's Parliament, could hardly be regarded as a source of strength. Such was the position of Great Britain when William Pitt, at the age of twenty-four, was on December 19, 1783, appointed First Commissioner of the Treasury.

For the first ten years of his ministry Pitt devoted himself to the recovery by England of that place in the councils of Europe which she had previously held, and which it was her right to occupy. The first two years were spent in placing the finances on a solid foundation, and in framing a measure of free trade with Ireland, which the jealousies of the two countries, expressed by their Parliaments, did not allow to be carried into effect. His next step was to conclude a commercial treaty with France, which was highly favourable to this country, and would have been more so if the prejudices of his Cabinet had not frustrated the designs of the pupil of Adam Smith. By a mixture of audacity and adroitness he broke the projects of France for a maritime alliance with the Republican Netherlands by restoring the authority of the Stadholder (William V) and making the Provinces the assured friend of England. Prussia was also brought into the combination, so that there was formed in Europe a strong triple alliance. England, supported by a naval State on one side, and a military State on the other, could speak

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with a voice which commanded attention. The French Revolution, which broke out in the following year, has thrown the Triple Alliance of 1788 into the shade; but it was for four years the dominating authority in Europe, an authority which always made for peace.

These successes will be recorded in the following pages. They ended with the conclusion of the Peace of Sistova in August, 1791, on which occasion Sir Robert Murray Keith, whose labours had brought it about, wrote to his sisters that he had made the best peace which had been made these fifty years, and had helped essentially in the general pacification of Europe. How vain are the predictions of man! The ink of the treaty was scarcely dry when the French government declared war against the Emperor; and on February 1, 1793, France made a similar declaration against England and the United Provinces. The remaining years of Pitt's ministry do not concern us here. The fair fabric of European peace, founded upon industrial prosperity, was shattered. But it may be doubted whether the triumphs of these first ten years, which made England prosperous at home and respected abroad, have ever been surpassed in the annals of our country.

Pitt chose as his Foreign Secretary the Marquis of Carmarthen, afterwards Duke of Leeds. His political memoranda give us precise information with regard to his own views of our foreign relations, and reveal, incidentally, the views of the Cabinet. It was necessary for England to find some ally in Europe, and Carmarthen had not risen above the prejudice of considering France as our natural enemy. The alliance between France and Austria, which had been formed by Kaunitz in 1756, was regarded as unnatural and menacing to the peace of the world; and it was Carmarthen's principal object to put an end to it. If Carmarthen had possessed more political insight he would have seen that the alliance between France and Austria was rather a hindrance to the action of both than a mutual assistance. In Austria Joseph II, after sharing power with his mother Maria Theresa, had recently succeeded to independent sovereignty; and it was rather against him than against France that the suspicions of the English Foreign Office should have been directed. Full of good intentions, with a just insight into the evils and defects of his time, he failed in all his undertakings, and stirred up bitterness and rebellion where he desired nothing but prosperity and good-will. He believed that reforms, which required the most delicate handling, could be effected by the issue of imperial edicts; and we have a picture of him in his closet, drafting proclamations at his writing-table, which his minister promptly put into the fire. Learning nothing by the failure of his domestic projects, he exasperated the Dutch by demolishing the Barrier Fortresses, by opening the navigation of the Scheldt, and by reviving ancient claims to the possession of Maestricht. He roused the ill-feeling of Germany and Europe by projecting the annexation of Bavaria to the Austrian dominions in exchange for Belgium. This

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gave Prussia an opportunity of placing herself at the head of the League of German Princes, directed against the predominance of Austria, which was an important step in the long duel between these two Powers which culminated at Sadowa. It was not to be expected that France could sympathise with these restless movements. She desired that the peace of Europe should be preserved, and she wished to maintain the friendship and the maritime power of Holland. She was also anxious to keep on good terms with Frederick the Great; and the schemes for the partition of Turkey, which Joseph formed in conjunction with Russia, were entirely opposed to the traditional policy and to the best interests of the French nation.

A wise minister would also have penetrated and distrusted the policy of Catharine II, who ruled Russia for thirty-four years. It is humiliating to read in the correspondence of Sir James Harris and of Fitzherbert of the efforts which England made to secure the friendship of Russia, and of the ill-success which attended them. We went so far as to offer the Empress the possession of Minorca; but, tempted as she was by the proposal, her calm judgment realised that the acceptance of it would endanger objects which were to her of much greater importance. However friendly she might seem, and however much she might appear to be occupied by her literary and other favourites, her cool head always kept the aggrandisement of Russia steadily in view. The two Powers, at whose expense she hoped to increase her dominions and her influence, were Poland and Turkey. Her eyes were fixed upon Constantinople, which it was not for the interests of either France or England that she should possess. By opposing France we were playing into the hands of Russia.

A statesman ought to have had some prescience of the calamity which was soon to overwhelm the monarchy of France, and to have seen that, with an outward appearance of majesty and strength, it was rotten to the core, and was hastening to the catastrophe of the Revolution. Pitt, in concluding his commercial treaty with France, saw that the true interests of England lay in the peaceful development of French commerce and industry, which Louis XVI and his ministers were desirous to encourage. By this policy France would have been strengthened to cope with those tumultuous passions, which, when let loose, were to carry havoc into every portion of the civilised world. But in the eyes of Carmarthen, and of the majority of Englishmen, France was still the hereditary enemy of England; and every intrigue or movement in Europe, however remote, was attributed to her malicious influence. We knocked at the door of every chancery. When Russia refused to listen to us we tried to excite the suspicions of Kaunitz; and his declaration that France had no hostile designs, and was indeed incapable of mischief, only made Carmarthen more certain of a secret plot. Our ambassador at Vienna was directed to assure the Emperor not only that we had no objection to his opening

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the navigation of the Scheldt, but that there was no object of ambition, however extravagant, which we should not be prepared to support, if he would only surrender his unnatural alliance with the House of Bourbon. Pitt was not an attentive listener to such querulous forebodings. In the early years of his ministry he paid but little attention to foreign politics; and, when at last induced to consider with some show of approval plans for separating Austria from France, and for forming some system on the Continent to counterbalance the House of Bourbon, he took care to express the strongest conviction that it was necessary to avoid, if possible, entering into any engagements which were likely to embroil England in a new war. The objects which Pitt had mainly at heart were peace, retrenchment, and reform. He believed that Britain, solvent and united, would be a tower of strength in a bankrupt and distracted Europe.

The first country to change its attitude towards England was Denmark, which had been one of the parties to the Armed Neutrality. In 1784 Denmark was virtually governed by Queen Juliana Maria, stepmother of the imbecile King, Christian VII, husband of the unfortunate Carolina Matilda, sister of George III. With the assistance of her Minister, Count Guldberg, she put her own son, Prince Frederick, prominently forward, while she kept her grandson, the Prince Royal, under the strictest tutelage, and removed from the Court Count Andreas Peter Bernstorff, who was known to be favourable to English interests. Efforts had been made to keep the Crown Prince in a state of childish dependency, and to cramp his abilities; but he had a large share of penetration, firmness, and self-command, so that he not only realised the position in which he was placed, but was able to control his feelings until the time for action arrived. Hugh Elliot, one of the most brilliant of English diplomatists, was now Minister at Copenhagen, and his subtle and intriguing spirit soon found material to work upon. He discovered that Count Bernstorff was in communication with the capital, and contrived to have an interview with him in Mecklenburg, and to arrange a plan by which the government of Denmark could be overthrown, and a system more favourable to England put in its place. On January 28, 1784, the Prince Royal completed his sixteenth year; and, on being shortly afterwards confirmed, he became, according to the Danish Constitution, capable of taking part in the government; but he still concealed his designs. At length, on April 14, at a Council attended by the King, Prince Frederick, Count Guldberg, and others, the Prince Royal suddenly rose and read a paper stating the absolute necessity of a change in the policy of the government, and concluding with the names of those whom he wished to be admitted to the Council. He then handed the paper to his father; and, after some altercation with Prince Frederick, the King signed it. A second document was then executed, which provided that no order of Council should henceforth be valid unless it was

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countersigned by the Prince Royal. Bernstorff was recalled, Guldberg was dismissed, and in the evening the Prince proceeded quietly to a Court ball. Elliot was full of admiration for the youthful hero of the revolution, who had kept his secret for two years, during which time he had carried on private communications and correspondences with various people, until the time had come for him to declare himself.

This revolution brought about some change in the politics of the north. Sweden was displeased at Denmark having acquired the strength of an independent position; and Carmarthen suspected that she was plotting against Denmark for the possession of Norway, and that she would be assisted in this enterprise by France, between whom and Sweden there undoubtedly existed a very close connexion. He smelt out a plot by which Sweden was to grant to France the use of the port of Göteborg, receiving the West-Indian island of St Bartholomew in exchange; and he succeeded in getting a joint note addressed by the Courts of St Petersburg and Copenhagen to the Court of Stockholm to enquire what were the intentions of France in this respect. To these matters Pitt applied only a moderate attention, partly because he was occupied with other things, and partly because he did not share Carmarthen's feeling of insecurity. The friendship of Denmark being assured, Carmarthen endeavoured to effect an alliance with Russia and with Austria. If Austria could not be gained he would turn his attention to Prussia. But Russia must come first, not only from her intrinsic importance, but from the weight and influence which she exercised over the cabinets of Vienna and Berlin. It was indeed impossible without the help of Russia to sever the connexion between Austria and France, which our Foreign Office regarded as disastrous to England and dangerous to Europe. Russia might object to making an alliance with England, the secular enemy of France, who was the chosen friend of Catharine's ally, the Emperor of Austria, or with Prussia, who was the constant and natural rival of Austria in Germany. On the other hand, an alliance of England with Berlin and Copenhagen might seriously offend both the Imperial Courts. Joseph II, with his awkward restlessness, was about to show the British government a way out of the difficulty by making an attack on the liberties both of Holland and of Belgium.

A strict alliance had been concluded between Joseph and Catharine in May, 1781, expressed not in a formal document, but in a mutual exchange of letters. Austria guaranteed to Russia the possession of European Russia, and of her dominions in Poland, as well as the maintenance of Poland in the position of 1773; and in return Austria received the guarantee of her dominions, including the Low Countries and her possessions in Poland. Joseph also bound himself to keep the Porte to the strict observance of treaties, and, if Russia should declare war against Turkey, to join her in the campaign three months later with the same

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number of troops. This alliance was directed primarily against Turkey, but also against Prussia. It was a profound secret; Frederick the Great had a suspicion of it, but knew nothing for certain. Thus fortified Joseph turned his attention to the Barrier and the Scheldt. By the Treaty of Utrecht the Dutch occupied, as a barrier, seven Belgian fortresses with 14,000 men at the cost of Belgium; while the closing of the Scheldt was secured by the Treaty of Münster in 1648. Joseph began by razing all the barrier fortresses, most of which had fallen into ruin, maintaining, however, the defences of Luxemburg, Ostend, and the citadel of Antwerp. In November, 1783, he demanded the restitution of the frontier between Belgium and Holland on the lines of 1664, the demolition of the Dutch fortresses on the Scheldt, the removal of the guard-ships, and the surrender of Maestricht.

If Joseph reckoned upon the support of the French alliance he was mistaken. France took the side of Holland against the Emperor, but when war became imminent offered her mediation. It was proposed that Belgium should enjoy the open navigation of the Scheldt, but that Maestricht should remain with the United Provinces. Joseph, irritated by delay, took a high tone, while the Dutch, excited in their turn, refused to open the river. The Emperor determined to force the passage, and sent a brigantine down the Scheldt, which on October 8, 1784, was fired upon by the Dutch, while another ship, sailing up the river, was captured. The Imperial Ambassador left the Hague; Wassenaer was withdrawn from Vienna; and the Dutch Commissioner retired from Brussels. An Austrian army was collected in Belgium, but without artillery or pontoons. The Dutch could offer only a feeble resistance, but they opened their sluices and flooded the country. King Frederick of Prussia naturally opposed the Emperor, and a European war seemed imminent. This was averted by an armistice which resulted in the Treaty of Fontainebleau, signed on November 8, 1785. The Scheldt remained closed, and the Emperor gave up his claim to Maestricht on the receipt of ten millions of florins. Frederick, an astute observer of politics, blamed Joseph for his undue haste both in threatening war and in making peace.

Coincident with the question of the Scheldt was that of the Bavarian exchange, a scheme of Joseph for incorporating the Bavarian with the Austrian dominions, and giving Belgium to the Elector of Bavaria with the title of the King of Burgundy. France seemed not indisposed to consent; Charles Theodore, Elector of Bavaria, who was sixty years old and without children, was favourable to the plan, and Catharine of Russia gave her approval. Frederick, now nearing his end, watched very closely a scheme which would give Austria an advantage in the rivalry between the two great German Powers. In July, 1785, the ***Fürstenbund***, or League of Princes, was formed to oppose the plan, and was joined by a majority of the Electors. Vergennes, after long

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wavering, declared himself opposed to it, and the Emperor had to give it up. This was the last triumph of Frederick the Great. When he died, on August 13, 1786, Joseph could breathe more freely.

We have seen that the English Foreign Office distrusted Frederick, and thought that it might be the best policy for England in her isolated condition to associate herself, in appearance at least, with the ambitious designs of the Emperor. But we possessed fortunately at the Hague a great diplomatist with a clearer insight and a stronger will. Sir James Harris, destined afterwards, as Lord Malmesbury, to dominate the fortunes of the United Provinces, had now come to England to communicate with the Cabinet, and, in May, 1785, he argued strongly for an alliance with Prussia. He pointed out that Austria and France were united for purposes of mutual aggrandisement — a statement not so true as it may have seemed to be to contemporaries — and that Russia was closely connected with Austria, and Spain with France. If these five Powers were linked together their influence would be felt by the whole of Europe, but especially by England and Prussia, who must therefore concert measures for mutual safety. If England wished Prussia to be clear and explicit she must be clear and explicit herself; she must meet the King of Prussia half way and be ready to make an alliance with him. If England and Prussia acted together, a League of Princes would be formed against the aggrandisement of Austria; Russia would be separated from the Emperor; Denmark would be preserved; Sweden would be rendered innocuous. This would be a union of defence and security, not one of attack and ambition. All past transactions must be forgotten, all future contingencies overlooked, and the importance of the moment alone attended to. France must on no account have the Low Countries; and, if Prussia would exert herself to prevent this, England would use similar exertions to prevent Austria from absorbing Bavaria. The alliance was to be formed on these grounds.

Austria and Russia were naturally opposed to an alliance between England and Prussia, and to the accession of Hanover to the *Fürstenbund*. On May 26, 1785, we find Count Kazeneck, the Austrian minister, protesting against the idea that the Emperor intended to employ force to carry out any of his projects, and complaining of a newspaper report that the King of England was one of the chief promoters of the League of Princes. Carmarthen replied that his master would doubtless ever prove himself, in his Electoral capacity, a zealous assertor of the liberties and rights of the Empire; and that, if there was no design of infringing them, no measures of a defensive nature in favour of them ought to give offence. Kazeneck said that an equitable exchange, agreed to by both parties, could not create alarm any more than if he and Carmarthen were to exchange their watches. Carmarthen replied that the value of both watches should be ascertained, and that what was to be given in exchange should be well known. Kazeneck rejoined that the House of

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Austria acquired too much advantage from the possession of the Low Countries to think of bartering them against Bavaria.

The Russian ambassador at the Court of St James' at this time was Count Woronzoff, whose letters from England, recently published, are of great value to the historian. He was strongly in favour of an alliance between England and Russia, and could not understand why England should prefer the friendship of Prussia. Calling on Carmarthen on June 14, he dwelt earnestly on this point. He said that the Courts of Versailles and Vienna, under an appearance of friendship, entertained the deepest distrust of each other. The Emperor believed that he would ultimately overreach France, but he was mistaken. France was making every preparation for war, and would in the course of a year throw off the mask and attack the Emperor. We know now how erroneous this forecast was. Woronzoff then approached the subject of the *Fürstenbund*. The accession of Hanover to this League would certainly throw the Emperor into the arms of France, and would play into the hands of France and Prussia, by preventing any possibility of an understanding between Austria and England. Carmarthen admitted that his own favourite scheme was an alliance between England and the two Imperial Courts of Russia and Austria, but that the Emperor had received every overture with coldness, and seemed desirous either of seeing England totally unconnected with the Continent, which was also the wish of France, or else of forcing her to connect herself with Prussia, a course which Carmarthen would never support unless compelled to do so by the Emperor. Carmarthen added that the interest of England was to prevent the Low Countries from ever being alienated, directly or indirectly, to France, which would be a most serious matter. As a fact the King of England signed the League, as Elector of Brunswick-Lüneburg, on July 23, 1785.

It has already been stated that the Treaty of Fontainebleau between the Emperor and the States General was signed on November 8, 1785. Two days later a treaty of alliance between France and the Provinces was concluded at the same place. By this treaty, which was ratified on Christmas Day, France was to furnish troops, and her ally ships, for their mutual succour; neither was to make peace or to contract alliance without the consent of the other. At the same time, by a treaty of commerce, each party was to favour as far as possible the interest and advantage of the other, by rendering to the other every assistance on all occasions; and they were not to listen to any negotiations or treaties which might be detrimental to each other, but to give notice of such negotiations as soon as they were proposed. These treaties were considered at the time as a great blow to the power of Great Britain. Vergennes was able to pose as the pacificator general of the universe. In the words of the *Annual Register*, it could not but be a grievous consideration to Englishmen that, while France, through the happiness of great ministers

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at home, and their choice of able negotiators abroad, was spreading her consequence and extending her influence through the nations of the earth, Great Britain, through some unaccountable fatality, seemed to be fallen from that high seat in which she had so long and gloriously presided, and to be no longer considered, or almost unremembered, in the general politics or system of Europe. Thus at the close of 1785 was Holland tied to the chariot wheels of France. But matters were soon to assume a different complexion.

One result of the closer relations established between France and the United Provinces was the conclusion of a commercial treaty between England and France. The eighteenth article of the Treaty of Versailles contained a provision that commissioners should be appointed on either side to draw up arrangements of commerce between the two nations, on the basis of reciprocity and mutual convenience, and that these arrangements were to be completed within the space of two years, dating from January 1, 1784. The English Ministry were not very anxious to carry this clause into effect. In order to put pressure upon England to fulfil her engagements the French government issued edicts in July, 1785, forbidding the importation of a number of British manufactures. Only raw material was allowed to be imported from England; and shopkeepers were forbidden to exhibit advertisements of "*marchandises d'Angleterre.*" After the friendship between France and Holland had been established by the Treaty of Fontainebleau Pitt saw that further delay would be dangerous. In December, writing a letter signed by Carmarthen, he asked for a further extension of the time, which was just expiring, in order to arrange a commercial system founded on the law of mutual and reciprocal advantage — a system which might form a solid and permanent connexion between the trading part of the two countries. Vergennes granted an extension of six months, which might be extended to twelve. William Eden, better known by the title afterwards conferred on him of Lord Auckland, was selected as negotiator. Eden had hitherto been attached to the Opposition, and was a friend of Lord North and Lord Loughborough. Indeed he was abused by his former associates for deserting his party. He possessed a clear head and great industry, and probably no better instrument could have been selected for the work. The treaty was strongly opposed by Fox, who argued that our commercial prosperity had never been so great as when our relations with France were most strained.

Eden reached Paris on March 20, 1786. The principal difficulty in arriving at an agreement lay in the Methuen Treaty, made with Portugal in 1703, which provided that Portuguese wines should be imported into England at a duty one-third less than those of any other country. Pitt, who was a disciple of Adam Smith, with economic principles far in advance of his age, was personally willing to abrogate the Methuen Treaty, to receive French wines and brandies on the

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terms of the most favoured nation, and even to make an abatement below the lowest rate of duty at present existing. France was eager for this step to be taken, but George III and his other Ministers were too much prejudiced to yield. The Methuen Treaty was not abrogated till 1831, and the importation of French wines did not become effective till 1860. The decision unfortunately lay with the narrow intelligence of Jenkinson, afterwards created successively Lord Hawkesbury and Lord Liverpool. He was inspired by traditional jealousy of the French and could not believe them to be sincere. A principle of reciprocity had to be substituted for that of Free Trade. After much discussion the duty on French wines was lowered to that paid at the time by the wines of Portugal; but the duty on Portuguese wines was reduced by one-third, in accordance with the provisions of the Methuen Treaty. French silks, even in the form of ribbons, were entirely excluded, owing to the opposition of the Spitalfields weavers. Hardware and cutlery were admitted to either country at a duty not exceeding 10 per cent., cottons and woollens at a duty not exceeding 12 per cent. Cambrics and linens, the products of France and of Ireland respectively, were admitted at moderate rates.

The treaty contained other provisions of a more general character. It established a reciprocal and entirely perfect liberty of navigation and commerce between the subjects of the two countries. In the case of the outbreak of war a year's notice was to be given to the subjects of either Crown for the removal of their persons or their effects. Both sovereigns reserved the right of countervailing, by additional duties, the internal duties imposed on manufactures, or the export duties charged on the raw material of certain articles. Besides this, contraband was defined, and the manner in which the visitation of ships was to be conducted in time of war was determined. It was provided that the neutral flag should not cover the enemy's goods, and that the property found on enemies' ships should be fair prize, unless it had been embarked before the declaration of war. The duration of the treaty was limited to twelve years.

It is difficult to pronounce an opinion upon a treaty concluded with France so short a time before the outbreak of the French Revolution. It is possible that the economic advantage remained with England, and that our hardware and linens found a market in France which French wines and brandies failed to obtain here. But the higher considerations of policy, which were certainly in the mind of Pitt, are expressed in a letter from Rayneval to Barthélemy, written on the conclusion of the treaty: "The balance which will result from the treaty is uncertain; but whatever may happen, we shall at least have acquired the unappreciable advantage of insensibly diminishing the national hatred, which has hitherto separated France from England, of substituting a legitimate for a fraudulent commerce, and of turning the profits of contraband to the advantage of the State. These considerations are more important than

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the indiscreet clamours which dishonest persons are certain to permit themselves both in France and in England."

We must now return to the affairs of the United Provinces. This is not the place to show how their constitution oscillated between an oligarchy of provincial Estates, supported by France, and the government of the Stadholder, which resembled a monarchy and was favoured by England, or to trace the steps by which the power of the Stadholder had gradually declined. During the first months of 1786 France was gaining increased influence, and the Stadholder was subject to continual insults and attacks. Party feeling ran so high that the Province of Zealand proposed to detach itself from the rest of the confederation and to place itself under the protection of England, a step which could not be taken without a war. The English Cabinet was not prepared for war; but it offered the Prince of Orange material support if he would place himself at the head of the party which was disposed to favour him. A memorial was also presented to the States General, warning them of the ambition of France and expressing the interest felt by England in the maintenance of the power of the Stadholder. When relations were at the utmost degree of tension Frederick the Great died, and was succeeded by his nephew, the brother of the Princess of Orange. Our ambassador describes him as a poor specimen of a King, tall, but undignified and ungraceful, sensible, but not refined or elevated in his ideas. He adds that his moral character is low and that he is much in debt, but that he is strongly attached to England, and that he wishes to marry his daughter to the Prince of Wales.

The first step of the new King of Prussia was to send Count Görtz as ambassador to the Hague; but this had no effect on the conduct of the Estates of Holland. They stimulated the formation of free-corps throughout the country; and the Prince, feeling his life insecure, by the advice of Harris surrounded himself with a guard. In September the Estates of Holland suspended the Stadholder from his functions and rescinded the Act of 1766, which gave him the power of military nominations. The Patriots, as they were called, held a meeting at the French ambassador's house, where they discussed the advisability of proclaiming the Stadholder an enemy of the Republic, depriving him of his office, and declaring it no longer hereditary in his family. As an answer to this Görtz was recalled by his sovereign. Harris wrote to Pitt, on November 28, giving a retrospect of his mission, pointing out the danger of the Dutch being under French influence and direction in politics, and asking that the friends whom he had succeeded in gaining for England might not be abandoned. Pitt replied with great caution, but in terms which were more decided than either Harris or Carmarthen expected. Carmarthen wrote in exultation, "Now we have raised his attention to the important object in question, we must by all means endeavour to keep it up, and not suffer Holland to be sacrificed either to lawn or cambric."

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The two parties, Orange and Republican, were at this time almost equally balanced; but the supporters of the Stadholder became gradually more numerous. Nearly all the peasantry were in his favour, and he had a majority in Rotterdam and Utrecht. Towards the end of March opinion began to change in the States of Holland itself. The situation of the Republican party became extremely critical. In their principal stronghold of Amsterdam they were weakened; in Rotterdam they were completely mastered; Friesland, Utrecht, Zealand, and Gelderland were against them, and Overyssel alone on their side. Just at this time Harris came to England. He found some members of the Cabinet in favour of intervention, but Pitt was more cautious. He said that if we did anything we must be ready for war. Harris insisted on the danger, probably illusory, of France attacking England with the assistance of Holland; but Pitt, in a characteristic utterance, deprecated any interruption to the growth of affluence and prosperity in the country, and asked whether this was not increasing so fast as to make her able to resist any force which France could collect for some years to come. Eventually a Cabinet minute was presented to the King, advising pecuniary assistance to the Stadholder to the amount of £20,000 advanced as loan or otherwise.

As soon as Harris returned to the Hague a plan of action was agreed upon. The Prince was to place himself at the head of the army commanded by Van der Hop at Amersfort, which was joined by English officers who volunteered for service, and every day grew in numbers. The Princess of Orange, a lady of great spirit and accomplishments, who exercised a deep fascination over Harris, suddenly left Nymegen and went to the camp at Amersfort. She then continued her journey to the Hague, but was stopped in the neighbourhood of Gouda by some free-corps and carried under a strong guard to Schonhoven, where she was treated with some indignity. The States of Holland passed a resolution approving of her capture, but after a short time she was released and returned to Nymegen. She wrote to her brother, the King of Prussia, urging him to avenge the insult passed upon her, and, with the characteristic hastiness of his disposition, he immediately prepared to march troops into Holland. This gave rise to a critical situation. The French were pledged by treaty to defend the Dutch if attacked, but England could not allow her friend the Stadholder to be crushed under her eyes. The despatches on this subject, preserved in the Record Office, are well worth studying. There is one dated July 27, 1787, which, by the frequent erasures and the sentences contributed in autograph by the different Ministers, shows the care with which it was drafted.

On September 13, 1787, the Prussian army, under the command of the Duke of Brunswick, advanced from Cleves and entered Gelderland. At the same time Pitt wrote to Eden, who was still in Paris,

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that the Court of Versailles must abandon the project of extending its influence in the United Provinces by altering their constitution. The authority of the Stadholder must be preserved; and, if the French will not accept these principles, the question must be decided by war. They must, as things stand, give up the idea of exercising a predominant influence in the Republic, or they must be prepared to fight for it. In this manner a war between France and England was on the point of breaking out, which, whatever its result, would have changed the destinies of Europe. But the success of Brunswick was too rapid. All resistance collapsed. Six days after the Prussian army had crossed the Vaal the Prince of Orange entered the Hague in triumph, and was invested with every privilege which had been taken from him.

This result, so satisfactory to England, having been attained, it became necessary to provide against a similar danger in the future; and the Court of Prussia urged us to take steps for this purpose. William Grenville was sent to Paris to strengthen Eden's hands, and to make easier for him the disagreeable task of submitting the friends with whom he had negotiated the treaty of commerce to a serious humiliation. On October 27 Montmorin signed a declaration that the King of France had not, and never had, the intention of interfering in the affairs of the Republic of the United Provinces; that he retained no hostile view towards any quarter relative to what had passed in Holland; that all warlike preparations should be discontinued on either side; and that the navies should be again placed on the footing of the peace establishment. A triple alliance between England, Holland, and Prussia, was now concluded. Lorenz Pieter van de Spiegel, who, as Pensionary of Zealand, had always been the warm friend of England, was now Grand Pensionary of Holland, and negotiated the treaty with England which was signed at the Hague on April 15, 1788. It guaranteed the hereditary Stadholderate in the House of Orange, and established a defensive alliance between the two countries. On the same day, and at the same hour, a similar treaty was signed between the United Provinces and Prussia at Berlin. The treaty between England and Prussia still remained to be concluded. This was done at the Loo, where the King of Prussia was staying with his sister. It was effected by the strength of mind and pertinacity of Harris, working upon the weak and wavering disposition of Frederick William. Harris saw the King on June 12 at seven in the morning; but it was not till after midnight, while a brilliant company were dancing, that the King asked Harris to walk with him behind the ball-room, and told him that he had decided to conclude a provisional alliance at once, with an act of guarantee for the constitution of the Dutch Republic, and in the meantime to sound and consult with other Powers on a more general and extensive alliance. Harris and Alvensleben, the Prussian Minister, had no secretaries with them, and spent the rest of the night in drafting the treaty with secret articles. Early next morning the treaty was submitted to the King, and

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then formally signed by Alvensleben and Harris in the presence of van de Spiegel, being entitled the Provisional Treaty of Loo.

Thus was concluded the Triple Alliance of 1788, a triumph for the foreign policy of Pitt. Finding England without friends and of no account in Europe, he had in five years, by establishing her finances on a sound basis, made her respectable and formidable. He had disregarded the arguments of Carmarthen to join the Courts of Austria and Russia, who were the freebooters of Europe, and whose plans were foredoomed to failure, and, following the safer guidance of Harris, had welded three progressive countries into a solid union, which was a guarantee for peace. For some time the three allied Powers, under the hegemony of England, gave the law to Europe. They prevented Denmark from assisting Russia in her war against Sweden, and gave tranquillity to the North. The efforts of England were used successfully at Reichenbach to nip in the bud an internecine struggle between Prussia and Austria. The Triple Alliance made peace between Austria and the Porte at Sistova, between Russia and the Porte at Jassy; it secured the Belgian Netherlands to Austria; it enabled England to speak with force and dignity to Spain in the dispute about Nootka Sound. It tended to calm the discord of Europe, to curb the ambition of some Powers, and the revolutionary movements of others; but it was powerless to conjure the terrible doom which hung over the devoted head of France. The whole course of its influence bears the impress of the serene and majestic mind of Pitt. Still, the advocates of non-intervention in the politics of the Continent may derive from it some support for their creed. It bound England closely with Holland, and thus was the final cause of the war with France in 1793. It led Pitt to contemplate the so-called Russian armament of 1791; and our desertion of Prussia, enforced by the public opinion of England, led to the desertion of the Coalition by Prussia at the Peace of Basel in 1795.

The limits at our disposal will not permit us to dwell in detail upon all these aspects of international history; we must confine ourselves to those in which England was most prominently concerned, and these are three; the dispute about Nootka Sound, the Russian armament, and the outbreak of the war with revolutionary France. Scarcely had a year elapsed after the conclusion of the Triple Alliance when the States General met at Versailles, and an event occurred on the other side of the world which nearly brought about a European conflagration. Nootka Sound is a harbour on the west coast of Vancouver Island. It is doubtful by whom it was first discovered. Perez claims to have gone there in 1774, and Cook certainly visited the place in 1778, and stayed there a long time. Retaining what he understood to be the native name of Nootka, he concluded on imperfect evidence that Spanish vessels had never been there; but it is not stated that he took possession of the country for England. For seven years after this the north-west coasts

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of America remained deserted, until the conclusion of peace again stimulated enterprise. From 1785 onward English ships, coming both from India and from the mother-country, visited Nootka to purchase furs. In 1788 the Spaniards began to bestir themselves. They heard that the Russians were invading Alaska, and they did not wish that either their trade or their territorial rights should be interfered with. In the following year Flores, Viceroy of Mexico, sent Martinez and Haro, on the ships *Princesa* and *San Carlos*, to occupy Nootka before it should be taken possession of by any other Power. Arriving at Nootka in June, they seized two English ships, the *Iphigenia* and the *Argonaut*, which they found there, and imprisoned their crews. These were taken to Mexico, but were released by the Viceroy on the ground of the friendly relations existing between the two nations, and the probability that the traders were ignorant of Spanish rights.

The news of what had happened came to the English Cabinet through the Spanish ambassador on February 10, 1790. He asked that the men who had planned the expedition might be punished, in order to deter others from making settlements in Spanish territory. We had, unfortunately, at this time, no English Minister at Madrid, as Lord Auckland had left in the previous year, and his successor had not yet been appointed. Pitt took the matter into his own hands and acted with the greatest vigour. The despatches, now extant in the Record Office, are written with his own pen, and speak with all the imperious dignity of the son of Chatham. His reply to the letter of the ambassador, dated February 26, is to the effect that nothing is known of the facts, but that the act of violence mentioned by the Spanish ambassador must necessarily suspend all discussion of the claims until the seized vessel should be restored, and an adequate atonement should be made for a proceeding so injurious to Great Britain. This haughty reply meant war, and Spain began at once to make preparations for it.

A breach between England and Spain was of more importance than might appear at first sight. The *Pacte de Famille*, an offensive and defensive alliance between the two branches of the House of Bourbon, signed on August 15, 1765, the last of a series of similar agreements, was still in force; and the Court of Madrid called upon that of Versailles to make its engagements good. The matter came before the National Assembly at the beginning of May; and Mirabeau had to make up his mind as to the policy to be adopted, both as secret adviser to the Court, and as *Rapporteur* of the Diplomatic Committee of the Assembly. On June 23, 1790, he advised the Court that, if they wished to give effect to the Family Compact, they must get it altered in form, as the nation would never support an agreement which was purely dynastic in shape. He recommended that they should send an envoy to Madrid for that purpose. The official report of Mirabeau was made to the Assembly on August 25. He proposed to maintain provisionally the alliance with

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Spain until a union of a more national character could be formed between the two countries; and he demanded that the French navy should be increased by thirty ships of the line, a number which the Assembly raised to forty-five. It is stated on the authority of Miles that Mirabeau received from the Spanish minister a thousand *louis d'or* for this service. Pitt became alarmed. He did not dread a war with Spain; but a war with Spain and France combined was a more serious matter. He therefore sought means of influencing the opinion of the Assembly through other channels than those of regular diplomatic intercourse. For this purpose he employed two instruments. One of these was William Augustus Miles, a friend of Lafayette, of Mirabeau, and of the leaders of the Jacobin Club, of which he was a member. The other was Hugh Elliot, the brilliant diplomatist, whose success in Denmark we have already narrated, who had been the friend of Mirabeau's youth. There are few matters in diplomatic history more wrapped in mystery than these two missions. The correspondence relating to both of them has almost entirely disappeared, and has eluded the most careful search; but a little salvage from the wreck shows us the drift of the vessel's course.

Pitt sent for Miles as early as March 4, 1790; but Miles did not leave for Paris till July. His son tells us that the purport of his mission was precise; he was to exert his personal influence with the view of inducing the National Assembly to annul the Family Compact; and he adds that, although not included in his official instructions, it was understood that the occasion would be used to promote permanent relations between the two countries. The letters written by Miles to Pitt between August, 1790, and April, 1791, have entirely disappeared, and they form the only gap in a voluminous correspondence. He writes, however, to Rose, on November 30, "I have very great pleasure in informing you that my mission is likely to have a fortunate issue, and that no difficulty will be made to dissolve the Family Compact, provided that France can count upon the friendship of England in exchange." An alliance with France was probably more in the mind of Miles than in that of Pitt. In October, 1790, George III wrote a letter to Pitt in the following terms: "From a thorough conviction how essential peace is to the prosperity of this country, it is impossible for me to object to anything that may have a chance of effecting it; though not sanguine that Mr H. Elliot and his French friend are likely to succeed, where caution and much delicacy are necessary. While our ambassador and official correspondence are kept clear of this business, it will certainly be wise to keep up the proposed communication, for the sole purpose of restoring peace, but no encouragement must be given to forwarding the internal views of the democratic party. We have honourably not meddled with the internal dissensions of France, and no object ought to drive us from that honourable ground." It may be mentioned that before Miles left London he

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had been ordered by Pitt to hold no communication, direct or indirect, with Lord Gower.

At the beginning of October Pitt had sent an ultimatum to Madrid, with instructions to our minister Fitzherbert that, if it were not accepted within ten days, he was to quit the capital without taking leave of the Court, and to return to England by way of Lisbon. Thus peace and war hung in the balance. At this juncture Elliot was sent to Paris, where it is probable that he remained only a few days; but the dates are difficult to ascertain. Whatever arguments Elliot used to Mirabeau or others—and the arguments which he used to Mirabeau may have been such as to account for the secrecy of the transaction—they were entirely successful. On October 28 Mirabeau wrote to the Court that peace was not difficult to preserve; that England and the English Ministry did not desire war but were entirely anxious for peace; while Spain could not make war without the assistance of France, but would be beaten at the first cannon-shot. Before this letter was written Florida-Blanca had come to the conclusion that his country had neither money nor credit for a foreign war. The hope of allies was vain; some Powers were hostile or bound to the foe, some were willing but were not worth having, others would ask too great a price. Russia was the most promising, America would insist upon the free navigation of the Mississippi and a large part of Florida, France was not to be depended upon. On October 28, the very date of Mirabeau's letter to the Court, the Nootka Convention was signed, by which England secured, and Spain retained, the rights of commerce, navigation, and settlement on the Pacific coast above San Francisco. Each nation was to have free access to the establishments of the other in those regions. England pledged herself, in return, to prevent her subjects from carrying on an illicit trade with the Spanish settlements, or from approaching within ten leagues of the coast already occupied by Spain. By this treaty England gained the right to trade and settle on the north-west coast of America, and Spain relinquished for ever her claims to sovereignty on this coast as founded on discovery.

The settlement of the dispute about Nootka Sound enabled England to act with effect in the matter which followed the Congress of Reichenbach. These events are more fully dealt with elsewhere, but a brief summary seems needed here. In the autumn of 1787 Turkey declared war against Russia; and the alliance between Russia and Austria became effective; and on December 17, 1788, the fortress of Oczakoff was taken by Potemkin after a long siege, with great loss of life. Belgrade fell before the Austrians on October 9, 1789. The Ottoman Empire seemed tottering to its fall, and was only saved by the death of Joseph II, who had made the alliance with Catharine. On January 30, 1790, just before the Emperor's death, Prussia had concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with the Porte. It was arranged that in the spring a Turkish army should invade Austrian territory from the side of Bosnia, while a Prussian army

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advanced from the north. Joseph was not ignorant of this combination, and wrote to Loudon that he expected to be attacked both by Poland and Prussia. He made preparations for resistance. An army 130,000 strong was stationed in Bohemia and Moravia, 100,000 men were massed on the defensive in the Banat, and 30,000 in Galicia. Belgium appeared to be lost; Hungary and Poland were ready for revolution; the mind of the Emperor turned towards peace. But on February 20, 1790, he died, a broken-hearted man, conscious of a wasted life.

A month after his accession, the new Emperor, Leopold II, wrote with his own hand to Frederick William of Prussia to propose peace; while England, who was connected with Prussia by the Triple Alliance, declared that she had no desire to weaken Austria, would be satisfied with a peace on the basis of the *status quo*, and would only assist Prussia if she were attacked. The dream of Hertzberg, the acquisition of Danzig and Thorn by Prussia in exchange for Galicia, which Austria was to surrender to Poland, began to fade away. The answer, however, sent by Frederick William to Leopold was not very satisfactory; and in June a Prussian army began to assemble in Silesia. The King joined it at Schönwalde on June 18, and told the Emperor that he was determined to make war unless his demand for the cession of Galicia was complied with. Leopold was therefore compelled to mobilise an army to act against Prussia. England was at this time embarrassed by the affair of Nootka Sound, and was anxious to avoid further complications in Europe. Pitt also had no wish for the aggrandisement of Prussia, and peace was in the forefront of his policy. So when the representatives of Holland and England came to Reichenbach they declared that they would support nothing but a peace on the basis of the *status quo:* Lucchesini, the Prussian minister, was summoned from Warsaw, and informed the King that Poland would never consent to the surrender of Danzig and Thorn. The King, ever subject to gusts of feeling, suddenly changed his policy, threw over Hertzberg, and determined to make peace. The *status quo* was accepted, and the convention of Reichenbach was signed on July 27, 1790. Austria agreed to give up all her conquests in the late war with the Porte; and it was understood that similar sacrifices should be imposed upon Russia. The policy of Reichenbach, which averted a war between Prussia and Austria, was another triumph for the Triple Alliance and for Pitt.

The Treaty of Sistova between Austria and the Porte was signed on August 30, 1791, but peace was not restored to Europe. The allied Powers had promised the Porte at Reichenbach that peace should be made on the principle of the *status quo ante bellum*, that is, on the basis of a mutual restitution of conquests. This would have compelled Russia to surrender Oczakoff, which had been won at such a great sacrifice of life and had given so much glory to Potemkin. Catharine could not bring herself to make this surrender, and so the war continued. At the

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beginning of March, 1791, Frederick William wrote to Sultan Selim that he was ready to declare war against Russia if she would not make peace; and we find in the memoranda of the Duke of Leeds that Cabinets were held on March 21 and 22 at which it was decided to send a fleet to the Baltic and a squadron to the Black Sea for the same object. Grenville was opposed to these measures and preferred to increase the armaments at home. However, a Cabinet minute was drawn up and delivered to the King on March 25 agreeing to inform the King of Prussia that a fleet of from 35 to 40 sail would be sent into the Baltic, and a squadron of 10 or 12 ships of the line into the Black Sea to assist the Turks and to combine with the advance of the Prussian troops on the frontiers of Livonia, and also to present an ultimatum to the Court of St Petersburg. The messenger bearing these documents was despatched to Berlin on March 27. Two days later a message was sent to Parliament, and the address in answer to it was carried by a large majority in both Houses. Fox, however, was strenuous in opposition; and Ministers began to doubt whether the country would ever support a war with Russia. At a Cabinet held on March 30, the Duke of Richmond, Lord Strafford, and Lord Grenville, seemed to think that a change of plan was desirable, whereas the Lord Chancellor, Lord Chatham, Pitt, and the Duke of Leeds, were opposed to any alteration. On the next day Pitt had a long conversation with the Duke of Leeds, and told him that several members attached to the government had voted against the address in the House of Commons, and that the feeling of the Opposition was rising. The Duke said that if there were any change of policy he would resign. Pitt replied that he felt not only for him but with him; but he urged the consequences which the breaking up of the Ministry might produce to the country in general and to the King in particular. The rest of the Cabinet were sent for. Lord Strafford declared that he had not slept all night, but pronounced himself against action, in which he was followed by the Duke of Richmond and Lord Grenville. Lord Camden was neutral. At the close of the conversation it became certain that a change of policy was inevitable. The Cabinet met again in the evening, and sat through the night. At 3 a.m. on April 1, a despatch was drafted by Pitt and signed, somewhat reluctantly, by the Duke of Leeds, asking for a temporary delay, the reasons for which should be explained later.

The opposition of the country to a war with Russia became every day more pronounced; and Pitt was in receipt of further information which made him less averse to accepting a compromise. The dispute between England and Russia turned, as we have said, on the surrender of Oczakoff. Lord Auckland, the intimate friend of Pitt, was at this time British Minister at the Hague. He was the most trusted and one of the most able of the English diplomats of his generation; and all the threads of the diplomacy of Europe passed through his hands. He was strongly opposed to our going to war with Russia, and indeed to any war at all.

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He writes to Lord Grenville, "It is to me wonderful that any man possessing any object whatever of honour, property, or security in any established government under the sun, can incline to increase the confusion of the world in a moment like the present. Internal tranquillity seems to me to be a consideration, which, with the example of France before our eyes, ought to supersede all others." The co-operation of Holland was necessary for a war against Russia; and it was doubtful whether the Dutch desired war. The Dutch admiral Kinbergen, well acquainted with the coasts of the Black Sea, wrote a memoir demonstrating that Oczakoff was of little importance compared with Sebastopol. Pitt, after careful consideration, determined to propose to Catharine that she should retain Oczakoff, but that the fortifications should be razed; and despatches drafted in this sense were laid before the Cabinet on April 15. The Duke of Leeds refused to sign them, and permission was given by the King for Grenville to sign instead. Six days later the Duke resigned the seals of the Foreign Office, and they were given to Lord Grenville, the King saying to him that he was influenced in his choice by the knowledge of his decided opinion how essential peace was to the welfare of the country. Though the fortifications of Oczakoff were not actually razed, peace resulted from this proposal; and Oczakoff is now of little importance.

The Treaty of Jassy was signed on January 9, 1792; and the conclusion of the war between Russia and the Porte set the seal to Pitt's aspirations for the settlement of Europe. But for one dark cloud, the significance of which was not yet fully apparent, a statesman might suppose that the peace of the world and the predominance of England was secured for at least a generation. When Pitt became Prime Minister England was isolated, nearly bankrupt, and of no account. In eight years of marvellous government he had re-established the finances of his country, had killed the canker of smuggling, had made a firm alliance with two progressive Powers, disregarding the advice of his Foreign Minister to connect himself with the military despotisms of the north. By a commercial treaty with France he had laid the foundations of a friendly understanding with our hereditary enemy. At the risk of war he had crushed the blundering and untoward ambition of Spain, and prevented, by a rare prescience, the natural expansion of Canada from being thwarted in a vital point. By a firm countenance at Reichenbach he had stopped a war between Austria and Prussia, and had then, partly by persuasion and partly by a show of force, constrained warring nations to clasp hands, Sweden and Russia at Werelå, Austria and the Porte at Sistova, Russia and the Porte at Jassy. At little over thirty years of age the young Minister could look with pride on a pacified Europe and a dominant England, which no one could now say was overshadowed by the preponderance of France. But vain are the previsions of man! In a moment this fair fabric was to be swept away by a

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cataclysm. The character of the Minister was to be changed and his reputation to be tarnished. As Macaulay tells us, the man whose name, if he had died in 1792, would have been associated with peace, with freedom and philanthropy, with temperate reform, with mild and constitutional administration, lived to associate his name with arbitrary government, with harsh laws harshly executed, and with the most costly and most sanguinary wars of modern times. He lived to be held up to obloquy as the stern oppressor of England and the indefatigable disturber of Europe. All this arose from the war with revolutionary France, which was declared against England by the French on February 1, 1793, and continued, with a short break, till 1815, nine years after Pitt had been laid in his grave.

We see from the letter of George III quoted above — and this view might be enforced by abundant evidence — that the policy of England had been to enforce a strict neutrality from the first outbreak of the Revolution. England knew nothing of the Declaration of Pillnitz; when requested in 1791 to join a coalition against France, she had positively refused to do so. She was one of the first to recognize the Constitution of 1791. In 1792 she took measures for reducing her armaments by sea and land; and, when France declared against the Emperor, she took every pains to assert her neutrality. Six months later she rejected overtures from the French Princes for similar reasons. In July, 1792, when war had broken out, and the French government wished Great Britain to mediate in the interests of peace, Chauvelin, the French ambassador, was informed that the King desired to preserve the present harmony, that he would never refuse to help in making peace, but that his intervention in the present state of war would be of no use unless it were done at the request of all the parties interested. His attitude of absolute neutrality was maintained up to August 10. Grenville wrote to Lord Gower on August 9 that Great Britain had been strictly neutral during the last four years, and that any departure from this attitude would only commit the King's name in a business in which he had hitherto kept himself unengaged, without any reasonable ground of its producing a good effect. With this view Pitt completely agreed.

The friendly character of the relations between the two governments is further shown by the instructions which the Marquis de Chauvelin received, when sent as ambassador to England, the document being dated April 19, 1792. Although Chauvelin was the official head of the French Mission, the most important member of it was Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, who was debarred from open recognition as having been a member of the *Constituante*. Chauvelin was instructed to secure, not only the neutrality of England, but if possible her friendship and alliance. He was charged to use every argument to keep England out of the coalition against France, and to induce her to join in a mutual guarantee of each other's possessions. He was to propose a continuation of the

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Commercial Treaty of 1786. He was, if possible, to obtain a loan of £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 under the guarantee of the English government, and was to offer in return the cession of the island of Tobago, which had been for twenty years (1763–83) under British rule, and was in consequence very largely inhabited by English.

After August 10 the aspect of affairs was entirely changed. Louis was a prisoner in the Temple, and the royal authority was in abeyance. The impression which these events made upon the English government may be gauged by the effect which they produced upon Chauvelin himself. He wrote to Lord Grenville that criminal and disastrous events had taken place in Paris, that the security of the National Assembly had been violated, that men of violent passions had led the multitude astray. He begged the King of England to use all his influence to prevent the armies of the enemy from invading French territory, giving occasion for new excesses, and compromising still further the liberty, the safety, and even the existence of the King and his family. No sooner had he sent this despatch than he discovered his mistake. He called on Pitt, with much agitation, and requested that the note might be returned to him and never mentioned. It was returned; but a copy was first taken.

It can scarcely be wondered that under these circumstances the Cabinet determined to recall Lord Gower from Paris. Grenville was not present at the Council; but Pitt, Richmond, Chatham, Hawkesbury, and Dundas, all agreed. The language they used was dignified: "Under the present circumstances, as it appears that the executive power has been withdrawn from His Most Christian Majesty, the credentials under which your excellency has hitherto acted can be no longer available; and His Majesty judges it proper on this account, as well as conformable to the principle of neutrality which His Majesty has hitherto observed, that you should no longer remain at Paris. It is therefore His Majesty's pleasure that you should quit it and repair to England as soon as you conveniently can after procuring the necessary passports. In conversation, state that His Majesty intends to remain neutral as to the internal government of France; that it is no deviation from this that he should manifest his solicitude for the personal situation of Their Most Christian Majesties, and that he earnestly and anxiously hopes they will at least be secure from any acts of violence, which could not fail to produce one universal sentiment of indignation through every country in Europe." In a circular to foreign ministers, dated August 21, George III again asserted his neutrality; and Lebrun, writing from Paris on August 23, although regretting Lord Gower's recall, declared himself glad to receive the King's assurance.

George III was quite in agreement with the views of his Cabinet in the recall of Lord Gower, and was of opinion that the effect produced on the mind of Chauvelin by the events of August 10 was an additional justification for the step. He writes from Weymouth, August 18, 4 p.m.,

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"The drafts to Lord Gower and Mr Lindsay transmitted to me by Mr Secretary Dundas, which were drawn in consequence of a Cabinet meeting, have my fullest approbation. I perfectly subscribe to the opinion that the note delivered by Mr Chauvelin renders the measures more necessary. I see no objection to the sending copies of them to him with a note acknowledging the receipt of his note." If Lord Gower had been continued in Paris new credentials must have been made out, and the government to which they were addressed must have been recognised by the British government. But there was no government in France which we could recognise at that time. The Executive Council was only provisional; the King was only provisionally suspended from his functions; the Legislative Assembly was on the point of dissolution, and the National Convention was not yet summoned. The question, whether we should or should not have opened diplomatic relations with the French Republic when it was duly constituted, is quite distinct from the question whether we should have kept an ambassador in Paris when all government was in a state of transition and flux. The ambassadors of nearly all the other Powers left Paris at the same time. If Great Britain had not recalled her ambassador in August it is not probable that she would have allowed him to remain after the massacre of September, especially when it is considered that the Duke of Dorset had left Paris in 1789 from apprehensions of his personal safety.

Although Lord Gower was recalled from Paris, Chauvelin still remained in London. It has been said that, although he was disowned by Ministers, he knew himself to be on good terms with the Opposition, and that he stayed in England that he might be a centre of intrigue. His despatches give little countenance to this idea; and Talleyrand was too well acquainted with the principles of party government in England to have given it his approval. When war between England and France became imminent, Chauvelin held some communication with the Opposition by means of Sheridan, who visited him secretly. But, so long as there was a hope of peace and even of alliance between the two countries, his object was to avoid all suspicion of the kind. His real fear was lest, if he asked permission to present his letters of recall, the King should refuse to receive him, and thus the rupture would be brought about which he and his employers were most anxious to avoid. He writes to the Foreign Minister, Lebrun, on August 31, "It would be natural to recall me, as the English have recalled Lord Gower, and I should be glad to go, but let me make the following observation. Lord Gower's recall is due only to the motive of *délicatesse monarchique*. We have no such reason; we wish to preserve the best intelligence with England. Besides Mr Lindsay remains. It might be difficult for you to draw up my letters of recall, or for me to present them. How very bad if I were refused an audience! what a triumph for our enemies! All the friends we have in England are agreed upon this point."

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The King stayed at Weymouth from the middle of August to the end of September, during which time home politics were in abeyance, but events were moving rapidly in France. On September 20 the cannonade of Valmy announced, as Goethe said to those who heard it, the birth of a new era; on October 23 a salvo of artillery all along the French frontier celebrated the liberation of the soil of France from the invading enemy; before the end of September the French armies had marched across the border. Nice was taken on September 28, Speier on September 30. The attacked became the aggressors; and the new Republic entered upon a victorious course of mingled conquest and propaganda. These successes did not appear to affect British interests until Dumouriez began to overrun Belgium. The battle of Jemappes was fought on November 6; and on November 14 the capture of Brussels laid the whole of the Austrian Netherlands at his feet. These victories encouraged the French to take a higher tone. Chauvelin, who had avoided going to Court lest he should be badly received, now asked his government for credentials as Minister of the Republic. He wrote to Lebrun on November 3, that the time had come to treat openly with England, and that he wished for positive instructions. It was possible that Britain might overlook the conquest of Belgium, but the slightest attempt upon Holland must summon her to arms. The French, however, so little understood the real nature of the crisis, that Maret, arriving in England on November 8, having just quitted the victorious Dumouriez, told Chauvelin that the General had spoken with a light heart of throwing a few shells into Maestricht; but Chauvelin had sense enough to point out that this would make war with England inevitable.

Maret, writing from London, explains the situation to Lebrun. He urges him to warn Dumouriez that if he attacks Holland it will certainly mean war with England. He says that war is dreaded by the City, even if the government desire to distract the attention of the people from domestic affairs, and that Dumouriez, as a "philosopher-general," will not be insensible to these arguments: that he will prefer the hope of a general peace to an additional triumph. He adds, with cynical acuteness: "Whether the state of our finances makes it impossible for us to go to war, or the fear of letting loose upon society a mob of the unemployed by disbanding our armies makes peace impossible, in either case the attitude of England towards us is of the first importance. If we wish for peace, let us make an alliance with England; if we desire war, let us attempt to form a connexion which will diminish the number of our enemies, and which may embroil England with Spain. Chauvelin, good fellow as he is, is impossible here. Send Barthélemy as ambassador extraordinary, and someone else as subordinate agent. I should be very happy to take this post. Nominate Chauvelin to some first-rate position. Noel could replace Barthélemy in Switzerland." If this advice had been

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adopted — and such was very nearly being the case — peace between the two countries would most probably have been preserved.

We now come to the two acts of the French government which formed the strongest grievance on the English side, and which are generally considered as the true causes of the war: the decree of November 19, and the opening of the navigation of the Scheldt. The decree of November 19 was passed, apparently in great haste, under the following circumstances. In the middle of the sitting, Ruhl rose and stated that the district of Darmstadt, which by the Treaty of Ryswick ought to belong to France, had assumed the national cockade and asked to become French. The Duke of Zweibrücken had sent an army to stop the movement. "The citizens of the duchy of Limburg in the district of Darmstadt ask our protection against the invasion of the despots. Also the Club of the Friends of Liberty and Equality, established at Mayence, have written to ask whether you will grant protection to the people of Mayence, or abandon them to the mercy of the despots who threaten them." He ended with these words, "*Je demande, moi, que vous déclariez que les peuples qui voudront fraterniser avec nous seront protégés par la nation Française.*" This proposition, it will be seen, is merely defensive. Fermont moved that the proposition of Ruhl be referred to the Diplomatic Committee, which ought to determine whether France should not only protect but guarantee the liberty of the neighbouring peoples, and this proposition was supported by Legendre. Brissot said that the Diplomatic Committee was intending to report on this subject on the Friday following. When Ruhl urged the cause of the "people of Mayence," Brissot asked that the principle of the decree should be voted immediately. At last, Larevellière-Lépeaux, that distinguished member of the Directory, who complained that it was so hard to found a new religion to take the place of Christianity, proposed and carried the following decree: "*La Convention Nationale déclare au nom de la Nation Française qu'elle accordera fraternité et secours à tous les peuples qui voudront recouvrer leur liberté, et charge le pouvoir exécutif de donner aux généraux les ordres nécessaires pour porter secours à ces peuples et défendre les citoyens qui auraient été vexés, ou qui pourraient l'être pour la cause de la liberté.*" Sergent then proposed that this decree should be translated and printed in all languages. The Convention then proceeded to other business. Such is the history of this famous decree. A few isolated facts reported by a member were made the occasion for asserting a number of generalities; and the decree, hastily passed, went even beyond the intention of those who proposed it.

The second grievance of the English government against the Republic was the opening of the Scheldt by the French on their occupation of Belgium. Britain appealed on the one side to the law of nations, they on the other to the law of nature. Both these appeals may be disregarded. The treaty of 1788 bound us to protect the Dutch possessions

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from attack or from the threat of attack. But in this instance the Dutch did not protest against French action, nor did they call upon us for assistance. It was a matter with which we had no immediate concern. In fact, negotiations were being opened between the Dutch and a French envoy at the time when the war eventually broke out. The idea of opening the Scheldt to commerce was not new. It had been, as we have seen, threatened by Joseph II, and was only laid aside in consequence of French persuasion. We had offered to support the pretensions of the Emperor if he would give up his alliance with France. This had been done while Pitt was Prime Minister. It was scarcely reasonable to regard as an insult to England, when adopted by one Power, the policy which we had ourselves favoured in the case of another. The opening of the Scheldt was announced to Chauvelin by Lebrun on November 27. He says: "No injury is done to the rights of the Dutch. Our reasons are that the river takes its rise in France, and that a nation which has obtained its liberty cannot recognise a system of feudalism, much less submit to it."

On the very date of the decree, November 19, Chauvelin wrote to Lord Grenville asking for a few moments' conversation, at any time or in any place he might appoint, either in town or country. Grenville replied stiffly on the 21st, saying that he must, under the circumstances, request M. Chauvelin to explain the object of the conference he desires. Chauvelin wrote on the following day, that he thought the proposed interview would have produced favourable results, but that if Lord Grenville thinks otherwise he will not insist upon it. A week later Grenville wrote that he would not refuse the conversation, and appointed a meeting at the Foreign Office on the next day at noon. In this interview Chauvelin said that circumstances changed rapidly in France; hence he could only say now that when he made his first request he was authorised to contradict the reports which prevailed in London of an intention of the French to attack Holland; that he could then have renewed the assurances which he had before given of his country's disposition to respect the neutral Powers, but that since this he had seen the note delivered by Lord Auckland to the States General, and had yesterday heard that two French ships had been fired at by the Dutch in the Scheldt. He could not say what effect such an aggression on the part of the Dutch might produce, but that the most earnest wish of all the French was to cultivate peace and friendship with England. He spoke of the opening of the Scheldt as a thing determined upon; that it was a natural right which the French had acquired by the conquest of Brabant. He endeavoured to obtain an admission, expressed or implied, that the treaty between England and Holland did not extend to that point. Grenville answered that he would have liked more positive assurances, but that the King was resolved to maintain inviolate all the rights of his country, and those of its allies.

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The main object of the French government at this time was that England should recognise the Republic. If this were done, everything could be arranged. Maret, afterwards the trusted servant of Napoleon, was in London at this time, and has left us an account of two interviews, one with William Smith, a Liberal member of Parliament, and the other with Pitt himself. From the first he derived the impression that England had negotiated with Spain, of which no evidence exists in the Record Office; that Pitt was extremely reluctant to go to war, which was true; and that the recognition of the French Republic was not at all unlikely, which was true also. At the second interview, Pitt began by speaking of his fear about Holland, of his determination to support the allies of England, and to enforce the rigorous execution of treaties which united her with other Powers. He expressed a sincere desire to avoid a war which would be fatal to the repose and to the prosperity of the two nations, and asked if the same desire was shared by the French government. Maret gave satisfactory assurances of this; and Pitt said that, if the French government would authorise someone to confer with the English Cabinet, someone with whom they could communicate cordially and frankly, they would be disposed to listen to him and to treat him with cordiality and confidence. Maret said that in this case England would have to recognise the Republic; but Pitt replied that this course must be avoided, as Maret thought, to spare the susceptibilities of the King. Pitt added, "Do not reject this offer and we will examine everything carefully." Maret said that he would urge Lebrun to send someone. Pitt replied, "Why not yourself? Write at once to Paris; moments are precious." This Maret promised to do. Pitt again spoke of Holland; and, as Maret was going away, Pitt called him back and referred to the question of the Scheldt. Maret avoided discussion upon this point, and Pitt mentioned the decree of November 19. Maret explained that it only applied to Powers at war with France; upon which Pitt cried, "If an interpretation of this kind were possible the effect would be excellent." Maret assured Pitt that the government had nothing to do with the decree; that it was the work of a few exalted spirits made in a burst of enthusiasm, and without discussion. Pitt concluded by urging Maret not to lose a moment in communicating with Lebrun. We learn from this that at the beginning of December peace was quite possible; that it was ardently desired by Pitt; that the burning question was the invasion of Holland; and that other matters might have been satisfactorily arranged.

Miles wrote on December 3 that he had found Maret affable, frank, and communicative, that he had been well received by Pitt, who appeared to be equally well pleased with him. Their conversation had been very long, and Maret had assured Pitt that instructions had been sent to Dumouriez to be circumspect in his conduct towards the Dutch, and to make no attack either on the sovereignty, or the privileges, or the

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independence of that people. The next day, however, Maret said to Miles, in a fit of despair, "Peace is out of the question. We have 300,000 men in arms. We must make them march as far as their legs will carry them, or they will return and cut our throats." Still efforts were made on both sides which might have been successful. On December 7 Lebrun determined to move Chauvelin to the Hague, and to authorise Maret to treat secretly with the English government. He presented his project to the *Conseil Exécutif Provisoire*, but it was rejected. Further conference with Pitt was not declined; but Chauvelin, the accredited Minister, was to be the medium. On the English side, the resumption of diplomatic relations with France was pressed upon the government by the Opposition, and was the subject of a special motion by Fox. We find in the Record Office the imperfect drafts of two letters, probably intended for Mr Lindsay. The first letter says: "It having been judged advisable by the King's servants that you should proceed to Paris with a view to the opening of such a communication and to the obtaining such explanations as appear highly important at the present moment for the general advantage of Europe, as well as for the interests of this country and of France, I have thought it right to entrust you with this letter, which you may show as your authority for entering into all such conferences and discussions as may be necessary for these purposes." The second letter recommends to the particular attention of the envoy the procuring the best possible information about the real state of France; the condition of the interior of the Provinces, that of Paris, the degree of stability which the republican form of government may appear to have acquired from the late successes, the disposition, character, and weight of the persons who conduct the public measures in the Council and the Convention, the state and amount of their naval preparations, and their prospects in point of finance. The envoy is also to provide for secret intelligence in case of war.

Events moved rapidly towards war. The condition of Europe made it advisable to call out the militia; and Parliament, which by statute must be summoned soon after this measure, met on December 13. The next day, Maret, by the advice of Miles, had a second interview with Pitt; but the Minister declined to discuss State affairs, or to give any answer as to whether he would see Chauvelin. On December 27 Chauvelin communicated to Grenville the explanations which Lebrun had ordered him to present. He says that, by the decree of November 19, the National Convention never meant that the Republic should espouse the quarrels of a few seditious persons, or should endeavour to excite disturbances in any neutral or friendly country. The decree is only applicable to those people, who, after having acquired their liberty by conquest, may have demanded the fraternity and the assistance of the Republic by the solemn and unequivocal expression of the general will. France undertakes not to attack Holland so long as she confines herself

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within the limits of an exact neutrality. The opening of the Scheldt cannot with any justice be made a *casus belli*.

The answer, dated December 31, bears throughout the stamp of the stern and haughty style of William Pitt. It states that in the decree of November 19 all England saw the formal declaration of a design to extend universally the new principles adopted in France, and to encourage disorder and revolt in all countries, even in those which are neutral. "England cannot consider such an explanation as satisfactory, but must look upon it as a fresh avowal of those dispositions which she sees with so just an uneasiness and jealousy. With regard to the Scheldt, France can have no right to annul existing stipulations, unless she also have the right to set aside equally the other treaties between all Powers of Europe, and all the other rights of England and her allies. She can have no pretence to interfere in the question of opening the Scheldt, unless she were the sovereign of the Low Countries, or had the right to dictate laws to Europe. England will never consent that France shall arrogate the power of annulling at her pleasure, and under the pretence of a pretended natural right, of which she makes herself the only judge, the political system of Europe, established by solemn treaties and guaranteed by the consent of all the Powers. This government, adhering to the maxims which it has followed for more than a century, will also never see with indifference that France shall make herself, either directly or indirectly, the sovereign of the Low Countries, or general arbiter of the rights and liberties of Europe. If France is really desirous of maintaining peace and friendship with England, she must show herself disposed to renounce her views of aggression and aggrandisement, and to confine herself within her own territory, without insulting other governments, without disturbing their tranquillity, without violating their rights." In these sentences is contained the whole case of England against the encroachments of the Revolution and the conquests of Napoleon.

We learn from Miles that Chauvelin dreaded going back to Paris, and urged the Executive Council to insist upon his being received and acknowledged as Minister Plenipotentiary from the Republic. His letters of credence were despatched on January 7, 1793, and an interview was accorded. Grenville said that he must refer the matter to his colleagues; and on January 20 Chauvelin received a reply which must have removed any lingering doubt. He had written to ask, first, whether his letters of credence would be received; and, secondly, whether the provisions of the Alien Act were to apply to him or not; even in his present position, to regard him as subject to this law, would be an insult to his nation. Lord Grenville answers that his letters of credence cannot be received; that, as Minister from the Most Christian King, he would have enjoyed all the exemptions which the law grants to public Ministers, but that, as a private person, he cannot but return to the general mass of foreigners

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resident in England. Louis XVI was executed on January 21, the news reached London at five o'clock on January 23. On the following day Chauvelin was peremptorily bidden by an Order in Council to leave the kingdom. He wrote on receiving the order that it was an unexpected step, and would certainly be regarded as a declaration for war.

If the government had waited a little longer this measure would have been unnecessary, for, on January 22, Chauvelin had been ordered by his own government to leave London without delay. Dumouriez had persuaded the Executive Council to recall him, and to send Maret in his place, with a view to Dumouriez proceeding himself to England at a later period. Chauvelin met the courier conveying this despatch at Blackheath. It ordered him to send a note to Lord Grenville, saying that the French are still willing to avoid a rupture, and to preserve a good intelligence; but this was now out of the question. Maret passed Chauvelin on the way from Paris to Calais, close to Montreuil. He and his servants were asleep in their carriages and did not notice Chauvelin's liveries, so that it was not until his arrival at Dover on the 29th that he heard of Chauvelin's dismissal. Whatever instructions had been given to him were now useless. Maret reached London on January 30. On the following day he told Miles that France would relinquish the Scheldt in a manner perfectly satisfactory to England, would give up Nice and Mainz, renounce the Belgic Provinces, and find a method which would release Savoy from being any longer a part of French territory; she would also withdraw her troops from Belgium, and consent to a general peace, provided that the Powers would defray in part the expenses of the war. Maret was to offer himself as negotiator, in the first instance, to arrange the terms, and that, when he had settled these with the British Ministry, Dumouriez, who he hoped would be well received, would receive full powers to sign and exchange; that the object of his mission was peace with England.

Maret, not knowing what effect the dismissal of Chauvelin might have in France, resolved not to demand an interview with Pitt until fresh instructions arrived from Paris. He therefore contented himself with sending a note to Lord Grenville to announce his arrival in England. In the meantime Chauvelin had reached Paris, and his report decided the vacillating Committee. On February 1 war was declared by the French against England and Holland. On February 9 George III wrote to Lord Grenville as follows: "The confirmation of the step taken by the faction that governs in France, of jointly declaring war against this kingdom and the Dutch Republic, is highly agreeable to me, as the mode adopted seems well calculated to rouse such a spirit in this country, that I trust will curb the insolence of those despots, and be a means of restoring some degree of order to that unprincipled country, whose aim at present is to destroy the foundations of every civilised State."

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CHAPTER XI

THE EUROPEAN POWERS AND THE EASTERN QUESTION

THE eighteenth century witnessed a number of changes of the first magnitude in the international relations of Europe. At the very beginning of the century Spain, deprived of the Netherlands and of its Italian provinces, passed from the House of Habsburg, which had held it for nearly two centuries, to a younger line of the Bourbons. After an interval of alienation the new dynasty became a partner in a family compact which made Spain the more or less subservient ally of France. Almost at the same time a curiously similar decline is to be traced in the United Provinces, which had risen to extraordinary prominence, and had developed a military and naval power out of all proportion to their internal resources, first in a successful rebellion against Spanish domination, and later in an equally brilliant struggle against the aggressive policy of France. While Spain became bound to France by dynastic ties and by common antagonism to England, the Dutch Republic came to depend for its security upon the support and guidance of Great Britain. Thus two of the great Powers of the seventeenth century sank in the eighteenth to the position of minor States.

These changes in the south and west were accompanied or followed by equally momentous and unforeseen changes in the north and east. Prussia under Frederick the Great was enabled by a great demonstration of military strength and skill not only to dispute with Austria the hegemony in Germany, but to assume a place among the dominant States of Europe. Sweden, which for nearly a century had been the strongest and most adventurous of the Baltic Powers, fell after the death of the last of her warrior Kings under the rule of a selfish and factious oligarchy. Her inevitable decline under these conditions was accelerated by the rapid rise of an eastern State which had hitherto been regarded as semi-barbarous and practically outside the European system. That Russia, in spite of the frequency of domestic quarrels and dynastic revolutions during the forty years which followed the death of Peter the Great, should yet have become at the close of those years the most powerful and influential State in Europe, is one of the most surprising

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facts in the history of the eighteenth century. Nor is surprise lessened by the consideration that this development was regarded with jealous misgivings by all the other Powers of Europe except England, and that Russia reached the zenith of her importance under the rule of a sovereign who was not a Russian by birth or breeding, but a princess of a petty German Court, who came to the country as the wife of the heir to the throne and ascended that throne on the murder of her husband. When the circumstances of Catharine II's origin and accession are taken into account, she must be placed even above Frederick the Great as the most remarkable and successful ruler of her generation.

The series of political changes was completed by the termination in 1756 of the long-continued animosity between France and Austria, and the conclusion of that unequal and uneasy alliance between the two States which the marriage of Marie-Antoinette with the ill-fated Louis XVI was intended to strengthen. From this time is to be noted a complete shifting of the centre of gravity in European politics from the west to the east. It is true that the rivalry of England and France continued; but this rivalry was mainly non-European, though it had some bearing on continental politics, partly owing to the complicated relations in which France was involved by her past history, and partly because the English King was also a German Elector. But apart from this, a survivor from the seventeenth century, or even from the days of the Spanish Succession War, could hardly have traced any familiar landmarks in the years from 1756 to 1790. The old battle-grounds in Italy and the Netherlands were left in perfect peace. The main strings of diplomacy were no longer pulled from Versailles, Madrid, and the Hague, but from St Petersburg, Berlin, and Vienna. Even France, so long the predominant State in Europe, fell comparatively into the background.

This was no doubt partly due to the military disasters and humiliation of the Seven Years' War; but it was also the result of the radically false position in which France was placed by her adhesion to an obsolete line of policy in Eastern Europe. For generations it had been the interest of France to hamper the action of Austria by maintaining a close connexion with the Powers which were most immediately hostile to Habsburg aggrandisement. Sweden, Poland, and Turkey, had been moved, sometimes singly, sometimes more or less collectively, as French pawns in the great game of international politics. It is obvious at a glance how completely the value of these pieces was altered by the appearance of Russia on the board. Sweden blocked Russia's way to the Baltic; Poland stood between Russia and central Europe; Turkey held the provinces which Russia must conquer before she could expand to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Every step which Russia took in advance was taken at the expense of one or other of these client States of France; and every such step diminished their utility to their western patron. A great statesman might have found an escape from the

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awkward dilemma in which France was placed by Russian progress. But the ministers who guided the destinies of France in the earlier half of the eighteenth century could do nothing but cling blindly to past traditions. Yet French intervention did nothing but harm to Sweden and Poland, and in 1739 only succeeded in postponing the partition of Turkey. On the other hand French hostility drove Russia into a somewhat unnatural alliance with Austria, which lasted almost continuously from 1726 to 1762 and produced many momentous consequences to Europe. The climax of confusion was reached when the second Treaty of Versailles in 1757 brought France into actual co-operation with the Power which she had so long and so ineffectually endeavoured to check. As the ally of Austria and indirectly of France, Russia occupied Polish Prussia during the Seven Years' War, in defiance of the traditional policy which France had hitherto pursued. And yet that traditional policy continued to be maintained by the French Foreign Office. The penalty for such folly and indecision was incurred in the first Partition of Poland, which annihilated French influence and prestige in Eastern Europe.

It was in the reign of Catharine II that the Eastern Question became for the first time the main pivot of European politics. The need of gaining the affection of her Russian subjects compelled her to pose as the enthusiastic champion of the Greek Church, and to carry on the traditional Russian policy of expansion in the direction of Poland and Turkey. From the first she gained striking and rapid successes. She secured the Polish crown for Stanislas Poniatowski ; she frustrated the attempt to restore Polish independence by a reform of the anarchical constitution ; she enforced the acceptance of the Partition of 1772 ; and she extorted from the defeated and exhausted Turks the Treaty of Kutschuk Kainardji, which gave independence to the Tartar Khanates of the Crimea and the Kuban, and recognised Russia as the champion of the Christian subjects of the Porte. The series of triumphs, which gave to Catharine a dominant voice in the affairs of Europe, was due to the adroit use which she made of the bitter enmity between Austria and Prussia. A combination of her two powerful neighbours would have been fatal to Catharine's schemes ; and she did all in her power, first to prevent such an alliance, and later, when it was actually formed, to divert its attention to a scene of action as far as possible distant from Russia. But for a long time such an alliance seemed to be removed from practical politics, partly because of inevitably jarring interests in Germany, and partly owing to the memory of that desperate struggle for Silesia which had persisted through two great European wars. So long as this animosity lasted — and it seemed likely to endure as long as the quarrel between England and France — Catharine's policy was to play off one State against the other by bribing each alternately to become her accomplice. It was this adroit but unscrupulous policy which familiarised Europe

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with the later conception of the Balance of Power; namely, that the great States might freely annex the territory of their lesser neighbours, provided their acquisitions were of equal extent or value. The precedent established in the successive partitions of Poland was only too faithfully followed in many readjustments of the political map during the wars with revolutionary France.

Of the two Powers with which Catharine had more immediately to deal, Austria, as the ruler of a large Slav population, had the more direct interest in opposing the growth of a great Slav empire on her immediate frontier. Maria Theresa in her later years was keenly conscious of this danger, and desired alike to support Poland as a buffer State and to maintain the integrity of Turkey. Catharine was thus driven to turn to Prussia, and in 1764 concluded with Frederick a defensive treaty for eight years, which was afterwards renewed for a similar period. This alliance led her to support Prussia in opposing the claims of Austria to the Bavarian Succession; and the Treaty of Teschen, which in 1779 repudiated these claims, was concluded under the guarantee of Russia. But Frederick, although the Russian alliance was rendered necessary to him by the exhaustion of his dominions after the agony of the Seven Years' War, by the rupture with England which followed the fall of the elder Pitt, and by the impotence of France, was by no means a subservient or an enthusiastic supporter of Russian interests. On the contrary, it was the general opinion of diplomatists that Prussian influence was dominant at St Petersburg, and that Count Panin, Catharine's chief Minister, was in receipt of regular pay from Frederick. In the first great crisis of Catharine's reign, when her intervention in Poland led to the outbreak of a Turkish war (1768), Frederick had not hesitated to check Russian ambition by a significant parade of a possible approximation between Prussia and Austria. In 1769 and 1770 he held his two famous interviews with Joseph II; and the risk of active opposition from Austria and of very inadequate support from Prussia greatly contributed towards inducing Catharine to consent to partition Poland, instead of adhering to her previous policy of making Poland a vassal of Russia. And at the same time Frederick had done little or nothing to prevent the one great reverse which Russian policy experienced, when the first *coup d'état* of Gustavus III (1772) overthrew the Swedish oligarchy and freed the monarchy from the intolerable limitations imposed upon it during the two previous reigns. Thus Catharine had good reason to doubt the utility of the Prussian alliance; and the influence of Panin was gradually supplanted by that of Potemkin, who held out to his mistress the attractive scheme of extending Russian dominion to the mouths of the southern rivers, and of expelling the Turks to make room for a revived Greek empire in Constantinople. For such a scheme more strenuous support was needed than could be expected from Prussia. Frederick desired, not to aggrandise Russia, but to check

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the restless ambition of Austria. With this end in view he actually proposed to include Turkey, and possibly either France or England, in a common league with Russia and Prussia. Panin could hardly hope to commend this plan to Catharine, nor could he even obtain a renewal of the Prussian alliance of 1764, which was to expire in 1780.

At this juncture a favourable opportunity presented itself for renewing the former alliance between Russia and Austria. For many years there had been serious differences on both foreign and domestic politics in the Court of Vienna. Joseph II, who since his father's death in 1765 had been Emperor and joint ruler of the Austrian dominions, was by no means in accord with the cautious and conservative policy of his mother. He was eager to restore the prestige of Austria, and to deprive Prussia of the proud position to which it had so suddenly been raised. It is true that he admired and consciously sought to imitate Frederick the Great; he did so, however, not slavishly, but in the spirit of a rival, who seeks to master the secret of another's success in order that he may emulate and surpass his model. His domestic reforms he had perforce to postpone till his mother's death should give him a free hand; but this made him all the more persistent in his foreign policy, in which he was encouraged by the support of Kaunitz. The partition of Poland was repugnant both to the principles and to the policy of Maria Theresa; but her scruples were overcome by the argument that if Austria held aloof Poland would still be sacrificed, and Austria would get nothing to counterbalance the gains of her rivals. In the end, on the express ground that it was not worth while to lose a reputation for honourable conduct on account of a petty profit, Austria succeeded in securing the richest share of the spoil. When Russia concluded the advantageous Treaty of Kutschuk Kainardji, Austria consoled herself by seizing the territory of the Bukowina, though she had no quarrel with the Turks, and had even promised three years before to maintain their cause. The chief responsibility for these discreditable transactions rests upon Joseph and Kaunitz; and it was they who prepared and brought forward the preposterous claims upon Bavaria on the extinction of the Bavarian branch of the House of Wittelsbach. But the repulse which they met with at the Congress of Teschen convinced them that their plans could never prosper until they had dissolved the alliance between Russia and Prussia. This conviction was strengthened by the growing coolness between Austria and France. Vergennes, who became Foreign Minister on the accession of Louis XVI, had previously held the French embassy at Constantinople, and had there seen clearly the disastrous results to French interests in the East which had resulted from the Treaty of Versailles. A foremost object of his administration was to free France from the excessive subservience to Austrian interests which had prevailed during the later years of Louis XV. This determination was disclosed to the world when Louis XVI refused to countenance the

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Bavarian claims of his brother-in-law, and France joined with Russia in guaranteeing the Treaty of Teschen.

Thus by 1780 conditions were prepared for that Austro-Russian alliance which was a dominant factor in European politics for the next decade, and very nearly led to the outbreak of a great European war. In June, 1780, Joseph met Catharine at Mohileff; and, in order to complete his acquaintance with the Russian Court, he subsequently followed the Czarina to St Petersburg. On November 29 the death of Maria Theresa removed the last obstacle in the way of a complete reversal of recent Austrian policy. In May, 1781, Joseph and Catharine exchanged formal letters, by which it was agreed that Austria should support Russia in compelling Turkey to fulfil its treaty obligations, and in case of war should employ an equal force either in coercing the Turks or in resisting any other Power which should interfere as their ally. Russia on the other hand was pledged to maintain the Pragmatic Sanction, and to defend the Austrian States against attack. With these mutual obligations was combined the agreement, that if either ally should gain any acquisition of territory the other should be entitled to an equivalent.

Frederick the Great was profoundly chagrined at the turn which affairs had taken. The termination of his long alliance with Russia was in itself a serious matter; but it was far worse that the advantage which he had lost was transferred to his one irreconcilable enemy. But Frederick was growing old; he was isolated both in Germany and in Europe; and for the moment he was powerless. France and England were still engaged in the war which had arisen out of the American rebellion; and, even if they had been free, Frederick had no great confidence in either State. Both Joseph and Catharine acted as if there was complete security on the side of Prussia. In 1783, taking advantage of internal disturbances among the Tartars, Russia annexed the Crimea; and early in the following year Turkey was compelled by the Treaty of Constantinople to acquiesce in the annexation. Austria, which under Maria Theresa would have protested against such a breach of the Treaty of Kutschuk Kainardji, now massed her troops on the Turkish frontier in order to compel the Porte to yield. Meanwhile, Joseph was pursuing with reckless haste a policy of domestic reform and external aggression that excited the terrified wonder alike of foreign States and of his own subjects. It is often suggested that the explanation of Joseph II's actions is to be found in his descent from the House of Lorraine, and his consequent freedom from the prejudices and inborn characteristics of the Habsburgs. But after all Joseph was no more a Lorrainer than were his brother and his nephew, and yet he differed from them almost as much as from his mother or his maternal grandfather. His personality is unique in both the dynasties from which he sprang, and it is difficult to assign any trait in his character to the influence of heredity. Joseph II was that most dangerous of men, a theorist in possession of absolute power. No

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democrat inspired with revolutionary fervour could show a more utter disregard of precedent and tradition, of racial and geographical distinctions, of the rights of property, and of ecclesiastical and social prejudices, than did this holder of the oldest secular dignity in Christendom. He attributed the success of Prussia to the way in which a uniform administration had remedied the difficulties of geographical isolation. It was his desire to confer the same boon upon the extraordinary combination of States and races which made up the Austrian dominions. To do this he must sweep away national habits, provincial privileges, judicial and other deep-rooted differences, and even distinctions of language. The task was beyond the powers of any ruler, and probably of any succession of rulers, and Joseph only reigned alone for ten years. It was no justification of such chimerical designs that he gave himself up to the duties of his office as no other ruler did, that he spent nothing on luxury or personal indulgence, that he was guided neither by mistress nor by favourite, and that his life was undoubtedly shortened by his self-sacrificing industry.

If Joseph II may be credited with good intentions in his domestic government, the same cannot be said of his foreign policy. No ruler in the eighteenth century was more greedy of territory, or more reckless of the rights of other States and of treaty obligations in the endeavour to satisfy his greed. He was equally ready to seize the Danubian principalities from Turkey, to round off his kingdom of Galicia at the expense of Poland, and to strengthen his dominions in Italy by the annexation of Venetia. But the project to which he clung most tenaciously was the acquisition of Bavaria. He could never revive his former claims; even Russia would not allow the violation of the Treaty of Teschen: but he might induce the Elector to exchange Bavaria and the Upper Palatinate for the Austrian Netherlands. To make the bribe more tempting he did not hesitate to quarrel with the Dutch, by repudiating the burdensome obligation of the barrier treaty, advancing a claim to Maestricht, and announcing his intention of opening the Scheldt to commerce. When all was ready he induced his Russian ally to make overtures to Charles Theodore of Bavaria, who had no great reason to love his recently acquired electorate and might easily be induced to give it up for a richer kingdom in the west. But the bargain was not to be made without effective protest. France was keenly interested in the United Provinces, where Vergennes had gained a signal diplomatic triumph by restoring the preponderance of the republican party against the House of Orange and the English alliance. All that had been gained would have been lost if Joseph had been allowed to dictate his own terms to the Dutch. And so for the second time since 1756 France interfered to thwart Austrian ambition; and by the Treaty of Fontainebleau in 1785 Joseph had to withdraw his claim to Maestricht and renew the treaty obligation to close the Scheldt.

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Still more humiliating was his failure in Germany. The union of Bavaria with Austria would not only have altered the whole balance between north and south, between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, but would have given to the imperial ruler so great a territorial preponderance as to endanger the independence of all lesser Princes. Joseph had already inspired alarm by other acts. He had procured the election of his brother Maximilian to the office of Coadjutor, which carried with it the right of succession, in the archbishopric of Cologne and the prince-bishopric of Münster, and had thus materially increased the influence of his family in both the electoral and the princely College of the Diet. Even the ecclesiastical States, so long the staunch supporters of the Habsburgs, were not prepared to acquiesce in the establishment of a really powerful monarchy in Germany, and preferred to abandon their religious prejudices by forming a strong alliance with Protestant Prussia. Frederick the Great saw the opportunity of emerging from the isolation in which he had been left by the desertion of Russia, and eagerly put himself at the head of the general hostility to Joseph's scheme. The *Fürstenbund*, the organisation of which was the last great achievement of the Prussian King, was powerful enough to prevent the carrying out of the projected exchange, and might, if Frederick's successor had possessed more character and capacity, have been the foundation of a new German federation under Prussian headship.

Joseph II had good reason to be bitterly disappointed. He had been loyal to Russia, and had aided his ally to gain that secure footing on the Black Sea which had been so long and so ardently desired. Already Sebastopol was being fortified, and a Russian fleet was being built in its harbour. But, on the other hand, Austria had failed to obtain Bavaria, which was to have been the equivalent to the aggrandisement of Russia, and the hostile influence of Prussia had been greatly increased by the League of Princes. Was it worth while to continue an alliance which had hitherto been so unequal and to Austria so disastrous? This was the momentous question with which Joseph and Kaunitz were confronted in 1786 and the following year. If there had been any satisfactory alternative combination, it is possible that they would have insisted upon modifying or even abandoning the informal agreement of 1781. In any further partition of Turkey Russia could hardly fail to obtain greater advantages than Austria could hope for; and Joseph was fond of quoting a significant remark of Vergennes, "How is compensation to be given for Constantinople?"

But it was almost impossible to find another alliance which offered any attraction to Austria. Prussia, in the eyes of both Joseph and his Minister, was the arch-enemy of Austria; and any alienation of Russia would re-establish the intimacy between St Petersburg and Berlin which it had cost so much to disturb. The French alliance, which Kaunitz regarded as the masterpiece of his diplomacy, was still in existence.

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But France was no longer so submissive as in the past, and had openly opposed Austria both in its Bavarian schemes and in the Netherlands. Joseph was, indeed, so indignant at the recent action of his brother-in-law that, but for the obvious danger of excessive dependence upon Russia, he would probably have repudiated the French alliance altogether. Of the five Great Powers there remained only England, which before 1755 had been for several generations intimately associated with Austria. Even since the rupture there had been little overt hostility between the two Powers. But there were two strong arguments against a renewal of the English connexion. If it should prove necessary under an altered system to oppose the advance of Russia in the East, there was at this time little prospect that England would render effective assistance. The Eastern Question had not as yet excited the keen attention of English statesmen; and it was a tradition of the London Foreign Office to regard Russia with peculiar favour. During the recent war with the Bourbon States England had done all in its power to conciliate Catharine II, and had even gone so far as to offer to cede Minorca to Russia. And, since the conclusion of peace in 1783, England had observed a benevolent neutrality at the time of the annexation of the Crimea. Moreover, an English alliance would almost inevitably involve a rupture with France; and this again would necessitate vastly increased expenditure for the defence of the Netherlands and of the Italian provinces of Austria. The security conferred upon these outlying possessions by the Treaty of Versailles (1756) had always been regarded by Kaunitz as the primary justification of that Treaty.

Such a survey of European relations must inevitably have induced Joseph and Kaunitz to give a longer trial to the Russian alliance; and they were further impelled in the same direction by the successive deaths of Frederick the Great (August 17, 1786) and of Vergennes (February 13, 1787). Both were succeeded by weaker men; and there was good reason to expect that Austria would meet with far less serious opposition when Prussia was ruled by Frederick William II, and Montmorin presided over the Foreign Office in France. Under the altered conditions it seemed by no means impossible that Russia and Austria combined might dictate their own will in the East, and effect that partition of European Turkey which had been sketched in outline in the negotiations of 1780. These anticipations were put to the test with greater rapidity than was intended by the two allies. For some time the Turks had been more and more disquieted by the insatiable ambition of Russia. Since the death of Count Panin in 1783 there had been no restraint on the influence of Potemkin, and he seized every opportunity to urge the Czarina to extend or to strain her power in the south. And in 1786 and 1787 there seemed little need for any great caution on the part of Russia. England was quiescent; France was occupied with ever-increasing troubles at home; Prussia was passing through the uneasiness attending the accession

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of a new and untried King. Of the neighbouring smaller Powers, Poland was apparently slumbering after the excitement that had culminated in the First Partition; and both King and nobles vied with each other in seeking to gain Catharine's favour. Gustavus III of Sweden had so far done nothing to excite alarm since his brilliant triumph in the first year of his reign; and any ambitious designs he might entertain were likely to be thwarted by the malcontent nobles. The ease with which the Crimea had been acquired did not suggest that the Turks would make any very resolute resistance to the allied heads of eastern and western Christendom.

It was therefore with great confidence that Catharine set out in May, 1787, to pay a ceremonial visit to her new dominions, which she had christened Taurida. Accompanied by a magnificent Court, including the envoys of France, England, and Austria, she embarked on the Dnieper; and a fleet of galleys escorted her to Cherson, which was built to be the capital of the province. On the way she received a visit from Stanislas Poniatowski, who virtually acknowledged his vassalage to the mistress from whom he had received his crown. Near Cherson, which was entered through an arch bearing the significant inscription, "The way to Constantinople," she was joined by Joseph II, travelling in his favourite incognito as Count Falkenstein. The imperial picnic proceeded on its way through crowds of applauding peasants by day, while at night the river banks were lighted by brilliant illuminations. It is true that the voyage on the Dnieper had to be abandoned before the mouth of the river was reached, on account of the appearance of a Turkish fleet, but the journey was continued with no less magnificence by land; and it was a proud moment for Catharine when she saw at Sebastopol twenty Russian vessels on the waters of the Black Sea. The tour was designed as a demonstration both to friend and foe of the immense resources and resistless might of Russia; and the impression which it made upon contemporaries shows that it went a long way towards achieving its end.

But the Turks, though they might be impressed, refused to be intimidated. Mohammadan fanaticism was inflamed by the danger to Islam involved in the encouragement which Russian progress gave to Christianity in the East. Every Russian consulate was a centre of intrigue against Mohammadan ascendancy; and, even if the Porte had been blinded by considerations of policy, it could not afford to disregard the overwhelming force of opinion among its subjects. The subjection of the Crimea to Russia was at once a blow to Tartar love of independence and a serious loss to the Mohammadan Church. Even while the Czarina was in the Crimea, the Turks were pressing demands upon Russia for the redress of grievances. The Hospodar of Moldavia had incurred the displeasure of the Sultan and had sought refuge in Russia, who refused to surrender him to his suzerain. Still more serious was the

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dispute about the principality of Georgia in the Caucasus. For many generations the province had been disputed between Turkey and Persia; but the recent decline of the latter Power seemed to justify the Turks in firmly establishing their authority. Russia, however, intervened, and seemed likely to establish a protectorate over Georgia, which must lead, as in the case of the Crimea, to ultimate annexation. The despatch of Russian troops to Georgia brought matters to a crisis; and the Turks determined to run the risk of war rather than tamely submit to further spoliation. No doubt such a decision was not come to without some hope of direct or indirect aid.

Diez, the Prussian envoy at Constantinople, was known to be a partisan of the Turks, and his influence might serve to bring about Prussian intervention in their favour. Austria might at the last moment stop short of giving active aid to Russia, especially as Joseph was involved in serious difficulties in the Netherlands. Hostility to Russia might be stirred up in Poland and in Sweden; and there was always the possibility that Turkey might recover an old ally in France, or find a new one in England. Such chances were always to be taken into account, but there is no reason to suppose that the Turks received direct encouragement or a formal assurance of support from Prussia or any other Power. Their action was dictated by passion rather than policy; and they preferred to risk everything in an honourable struggle rather than tamely submit to insult and loss. Catharine II had no intention of hurrying matters, and was disposed to a moderate and temporising policy by her intercourse with Joseph, which had not resulted in any definite agreement. But on her return from the south to St Petersburg she learned that immediate hostilities were inevitable. On August 15, 1787, the Russian ambassador in Constantinople was summoned to a formal interview and was called upon to abandon all Russian pretensions in Georgia. He offered to refer the demand to his Court; but it was too late for such a familiar expedient for delay, and he was imprisoned in the fortress of the Seven Towers. This was the Turkish method of declaring war, and it certainly did not err in any lack of precision. Fortunately for Russia, the preparations of the Turks were unequal to their courage. Instead of striking a decisive blow while the enemy was unready, their operations in 1787 were limited to the siege of Kinburn at the mouth of the Dnieper, which was defended with equal skill and obstinacy by Suvóroff. This gave Catharine time to make preparations, and to call upon Austria for assistance.

In the autumn of 1787 Joseph II had his last chance of reconsidering the advisability of going to war with Turkey as the ally of Russia. The prospect was not altogether an inviting one; and the disparity of power had been brought home to him during his journey on Russian soil. A listener has preserved a fragment of conversation between the imperial fellow-travellers. "'I have thirty million subjects,' said one, 'counting

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only males.' 'And I have twenty-two, including all,' replied the other. 'I need,' added one, 'an army of 600,000 men from Kamschatka to Riga.' 'My needs are satisfied with exactly half as many,' was the reply." In spite of the difference of resources, Austria was to provide a force equal to that of Russia, and her reward was still undetermined. That Joseph would have preferred to postpone hostilities is certain; but delay was now impossible, and he was too deeply pledged to repudiate his obligations to Russia. After a winter spent in planning the campaign and collecting the necessary forces, he declared war against Turkey in February, 1788. He must have had grave misgivings as to the morality and the prudence of his action. The Turks had given him no ground of quarrel; on the contrary they had of late years been extraordinarily careful to avoid any offence against Austria; and in embarking on a wholly unprovoked war for the aggrandisement of his own State Joseph had good reason to anticipate serious difficulties both from the disaffection of his own subjects and from the inveterate hostility of Prussia.

The first overt resistance to the government of Joseph II came from the most distant and least valued of his dominions. The southern Netherlands had been handed over to Austria in 1714 to be held as it were in trust for the Maritime Powers, who were primarily interested in the exclusion of French influence and in the maintenance of a buffer between France and the United Provinces. When Charles VI endeavoured to revive the commerce of his new possessions by founding the Ostend Company, England and the Provinces never rested until they had compelled him to abandon the project. It is not surprising that the Austrian rulers were eager to find a purchaser for territories which were a source of expense rather than of revenue, and which by their geographical position involved Austria in all the intricate jealousies of western politics. Kaunitz proposed in 1757 to hand the Austrian Netherlands over to the House of Bourbon, on condition that France should join in effecting the partition of Prussia; and Joseph himself offered them in exchange for Bavaria. It was only when this project had perforce to be abandoned that the Emperor set to work to introduce the administrative reforms which he had already endeavoured to set on foot in his other dominions. But the task was one which required far greater tact and far more intimate knowledge of the Netherlands than Joseph possessed.

There was as yet no real central government. The various Provinces were for the most part in enjoyment of the same separate institutions and the same local independence that they enjoyed when they first came under the rule of the Dukes of Burgundy. The "Joyous Entry," the charter of Brabant and Limburg which Philip the Good had sworn to in the fifteenth century, was still confirmed by each successive Duke on his accession. By one of its clauses, if the sovereign broke the provisions of the charter, his subjects were released from their obligation of obedience. Similar, if less explicit, assurances of provincial liberties were given,

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either by charter or by treaty, to the people of Flanders, Namur, Hainault, and the other Provinces. There was in each some form of Estates, which had the right of granting taxes, and whose consent was necessary for the validity of new laws. After the great revolt of the Netherlands against Philip II in the sixteenth century Spain had recovered its hold upon the southern Provinces, partly by a close alliance with the Roman Catholic clergy, and partly by promises to maintain local privileges and independence. Austria had succeeded to the traditions of Spanish rule; and, since the termination of hostility with France, the Netherlands had enjoyed an unusual period of peace and prosperity. The office of Viceroy was usually held by some member of the imperial family, and since 1780 had been entrusted to Maria Christina, a sister of Joseph, and her husband, Albert of Saxe-Teschen. There was some dissatisfaction at the failure of Joseph's endeavour to open the Scheldt; but this would soon have subsided if his restless activity had not led him to attack the double foundations on which Habsburg domination had so long rested—the supremacy of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and the respect for provincial customs and privileges.

In 1786 Joseph took his first step towards the eradication of ultramontane tendencies among the Belgian clergy. He had already suppressed some of the too numerous monasteries, and granted to the Protestants toleration for their worship and admission to civil employments. He now proceeded to impose upon the clergy an education which was to inculcate the primary obligation of obedience to the State; and with that object he founded in Louvain a seminary for the training of future priests. The University of Louvain, one of the glories of Brabant and a stronghold of ultramontanism, was transferred to Brussels, where it would be under the eye of the government. The students, who noisily demonstrated against the change, were coerced into obedience; the Archbishop of Malines was compelled to go to Vienna to apologise for his protests; and the papal Nuncio was expelled from the country. In January, 1787, came the first of a series of Edicts for the reform of the secular administration. A uniform system of jurisdiction was established, with two regular Courts of Appeal; and all feudal and clerical Courts were abolished. The whole of the Netherlands, as if it were a single dependency, was to be divided into nine districts or circles; and at the head of each was to be an Intendant nominated from Vienna. For the support of the new administration certain fixed taxes were allocated, which thus became permanent charges instead of temporary grants from the various Estates. Thus in the State as in the Church Joseph attacked the strongest and most deeply-rooted sentiments of the Belgian people.

The Estates of Brabant made themselves the mouthpiece of the general ill-will. They declared the imperial ordinances to be contrary to the "Joyous Entry," refused to grant supplies, and drew up a formal

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protest for presentation to the Regents. Maria Christina and her husband were in a cruel dilemma. Since the garrisons had been withdrawn from the barrier fortresses they had no adequate force at their disposal to put down opposition. They had no special interest in the Edicts, which had been issued without their opinion being asked; and they would have personally preferred the continuance of the old state of things. A riot in Brussels, organised by van der Noot, an advocate who was closely identified with the cause of the malcontent hierarchy, forced them to come to a decision; and on May 30 they agreed to suspend the execution of the new ordinances so far as they were contrary to the Charter of Brabant. The news of actual rebellion in the Austrian Netherlands reached Joseph while he was in Catharine's company; and, though he tried to disguise his uneasiness, he was compelled to hasten his return to Vienna. His first impulse was to carry matters with a high hand. He recalled the Regents, disavowed their action, and entrusted the temporary government to Count Murray, the commander of the Austrian forces in the Netherlands. At the same time he called upon the provincial Estates to combine together in the selection of delegates to represent their grievances in Vienna. This was a characteristically rash step to take, as the joint meeting of the representatives in Brussels was the first step towards a republican federation of Belgium.

On August 15 the thirty delegates were admitted to a formal audience of the Emperor, reprimanded for their resistance to the benevolent intentions of their ruler, who desired to improve, not to abolish, their institutions, and ordered on their return to insist upon the payment of the usual subsidies and the revocation of all acts of the Estates which ran counter to the Emperor's authority. Only when this complete submission should be made did he hold out the hope of concessions to his subjects' demands. He had already collected a considerable body of troops which were on the march to the Netherlands to enforce his will. What would have been the result of this resolute attitude it is impossible to say, for it was abandoned almost as soon as it had been assumed. On the very day on which Joseph spoke with such apparent firmness the Russian envoy was imprisoned in Constantinople. The outbreak of war in the East made all the difference to Joseph's plans. Kaunitz, who had never approved the new system in the Netherlands, could employ the unanswerable argument that it was impossible to interfere effectually in the East and to gain the advantages that were offered there, if a large proportion of the Austrian army had to be employed in suppressing a rebellion in the West. The influence of Catharine II was also employed for obvious reasons on the side of moderation. Joseph could not be insensible to such representations; but he could not make up his mind to abandon measures which he honestly believed to be both advantageous and just. He recalled the troops that were to have gone to the Netherlands, and adopted a more conciliatory tone towards the delegates before

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their departure from Vienna. But he had no intention of making permanent concessions.

When Count Murray, intimidated by another riot, agreed in September once more to suspend the ordinances, Joseph dismissed him in disgrace, and entrusted the military command to d'Alton, a rough and overbearing martinet, while Count Trautmansdorf was appointed chief Minister in civil affairs. This appointment was in itself an act of duplicity. While the general advocated severe measures of repression, the Minister was all for conciliation. The constitutional Edicts were for a time allowed to drop; and the chief questions at issue during the winter were the establishment of the seminary at Louvain, the payment of the taxes, and the disarmament of the volunteers who had taken up arms during the previous disorders. In most of the Provinces there was an inclination to be grateful for the Emperor's moderation, and it was only in Brabant that any serious difficulties occurred. In January, 1788, the troops fired on the mob at Brussels; and, though Trautmansdorf disavowed their action, Joseph gave it his subsequent approval. For a time the display of force was effectual. Some of the boldest leaders of disaffection, such as van der Noot, went into exile, and on the immediate questions the Estates gave way. The University of Louvain was closed, and the seminary was opened. The volunteers were disarmed and the taxes were granted. When the Regents returned in the spring of 1788 they found a superficial tranquillity in the Netherlands. But the causes of disaffection had not been removed, and the imminent revolution had only been postponed.

While Joseph II was occupied in dealing with these Belgian disturbances and in preparing for war with Turkey, Prussia had made a striking demonstration of her power by a successful intervention in Holland. For several years past the internal politics of the United Provinces had been a matter of European concern. The origin of Dutch parties dates from the very foundation of the Republic. On the one hand was the strong tradition of independence among the burgher class, especially in the wealthy cities of Holland. On the other hand was the powerful influence of the Princes of the House of Orange-Nassau, who had rendered such conspicuous service in the struggle for independence, and had been rewarded with the grant of a number of offices, some federal and some provincial, which were collectively known as the stadholdership. The Orange Princes represented the cause of centralisation, of united national effort, of the interests of the whole State as against local and class privileges. On the other hand the republican party represented the ascendancy of the wealthy burghers in the municipalities, and also the predominance in the federation of the great Province of Holland, which contributed to the common revenue as much as the other six Provinces together. The strength of this party lay in the provincial Estates of Holland and in the town Council of Amsterdam; whereas their opponents

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relied mainly upon the support of Zeeland and other lesser Provinces, and also upon the lower classes who resented the exclusive rule of the civic oligarchy in the towns.

The fluctuations of party strife were necessarily mixed up to some extent with external relations. In times of danger and crisis the Orange party came to the front, because united effort was then needed, and this could only be attained under something like monarchical rule. Thus a French invasion in 1673 gave the stadholdership to William III after the office had been suspended for twenty-three years. On William's death in 1702 the main line of his House became extinct, and the office was again in abeyance until 1747, when another French invasion not merely revived the stadholdership but made it hereditary in the hands of a younger branch of the Orange family and greatly increased its powers. These events rendered party differences a matter of international importance. The Orange Princes, raised to power by national antagonism to France, leaned for support upon England. William III, himself the grandson of Charles I, had married a daughter of James II, and had actually worn the English crown. William IV married the eldest daughter of George II; and his son and successor, William V, was thus the first cousin of George III. The republican party was impelled by the spirit of opposition to cultivate friendly relations with France. But this was impossible as long as France threatened Dutch independence; and for several generations the party was deprived of external support and comparatively impotent.

The second half of the eighteenth century witnessed a very marked change both in the foreign relations and in the internal politics of the United Provinces. English dictation became unpopular, while the sense of danger from France was almost removed. In the Seven Years' War the Netherlands had been undisturbed by hostilities; and the enormous advance of English maritime and colonial power excited the jealousy of the mercantile classes. Vergennes, the ablest French Foreign Minister of the century, took prompt advantage of the altered sentiments of the Dutch to bring about a revival of the republican party under the patronage and encouragement of France. To the astonishment of Europe, the Dutch in 1779 joined in the formidable coalition which had been formed to take advantage of the difficulties in which Great Britain was involved by the American revolt. Their ill-success in the war inspired a feeling of bitter hostility against the Stadholder, William V, who was regarded as a very half-hearted opponent of the State with which his family had been so long and closely connected. By championing Dutch interests against Joseph II, Vergennes still further increased the influence of France; and the Treaty of Fontainebleau was followed in November, 1785, by the conclusion of a formal alliance between France and the States General. Encouraged by the assurance of foreign support, the leaders of the republican party prepared in 1786 to complete their

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victory by abolishing the hereditary stadholdership which had been established in 1747. Such a revolution would have been a signal triumph for France and a humiliating blow to Great Britain. Sir James Harris, who was at this time the English envoy at the Hague, undertook the task of reorganising the Orange party, and, with the warm approval of the stadholder, established intimate relations with all the various sections of the community, and especially with the leading politicians of the lesser Provinces, who were hostile to the now omnipotent Estates of Holland. Matters seemed to have reached a crisis when in September, 1786, William V employed armed force to reduce two towns in Gelderland, which had rebelled against his authority. The Provincial Estates of Holland, claiming a federal authority to which they had no right, retaliated by depriving him of the command of the army. Everything pointed to civil war; and the superiority of force was on the side of the republicans, who were confident of French aid.

Sir James Harris realised that all was lost unless the partisans of the Stadholder could also rely upon foreign support. Pitt, to whom he appealed, refused to commit England to a policy which would probably involve a renewal of war with France. The only other State which had both the interest and the power to intervene was Prussia. The wife of William V was Wilhelmina, the niece of Frederick the Great, and sister of the heir to the Prussian throne. To all appeals from Holland Frederick the Great had turned a deaf ear. From his point of view it was imperative to do nothing which might drive France once more into close co-operation with Austria. The accession of Frederick William II excited great hopes in the breast of the Stadholder and his partisans. The new King was a nearer relative; he was more impulsive and less experienced; and he was not unwilling to have an early opportunity of posing as a great personage on the European stage. Hertzberg, who had the chief voice in foreign affairs, had disapproved of Frederick's policy of neutrality, and was in favour of intervention. But a strong party in Berlin, including the King's uncle, Prince Henry, was opposed to any breach of the good understanding with France. All that the new King would do was to send an envoy with instructions to arrange some compromise by which the office of Stadholder should be maintained even though its powers were restricted. Passions and interests, however, had been too keenly excited to admit of any compromise, even if William V and his English counsellor had been willing to accept one. The contending parties were standing ready in armed hostility when a dramatic incident gave a new turn to the situation.

In June, 1787, Wilhelmina undertook a journey to the Hague in order to represent her husband's cause to the States General. On her way from Nymegen, where the Court had resided since its practical expulsion from the capital, she was arrested and for a time actually imprisoned by a body of republican troops on the frontier of Holland.

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Lord Carmarthen, in his answer to a gloomy letter from Harris, shrewdly grasped the situation. "Don't be so disheartened by a check to the Queen; let her be covered by the Knight, and all is safe. Seriously, I am sorry for anything so unpleasant happening to the Princess, whose character so highly deserves a better fate; the event, however, may still be productive of good. If the King, her brother, is not the dirtiest and shabbiest of Kings he must resent it, *coûte que coûte.*"

Frederick William II, whatever his defects, did not merit these particular epithets. The insult to his sister touched the chivalrous instincts of his impulsive nature, and he promptly demanded that ample satisfaction should be given to her by the States General and the Estates of Holland. The demand was evaded, and the latter assembly continued to discuss the suspension of the Prince of Orange from the stadholdership of the Province. Frederick William stood firm, and in September a Prussian army under the Duke of Brunswick crossed the Dutch frontier from the duchy of Cleves. Pitt's scruples were overcome by the resolute action of Prussia; and by a secret convention Great Britain undertook to take part in the demonstration by raising forty ships, and also to make war on any State which should oppose Prussian intervention. Everything now turned upon the action of France. If Vergennes had lived, he might have been willing to strike a blow rather than allow all the advantages which he had gained to be swept away. But Vergennes had died in the early part of the year; and his policy died with him. France was appealing to an Assembly of Notables to find a remedy for acute financial troubles, and was hardly in a position to add to these troubles by embarking on a war. In view of the action of the Turks no aid could be expected from either Austria or Russia, even if those Powers had thought well to interfere. And so France stood aloof and allowed the republican or "patriotic" party to suffer for its excessive confidence in French honour. The abstention of France decided the fate of Holland. The Prussian march was rather a triumphal progress than a military invasion. One town after another opened its gates, and the surrender of Amsterdam on October 10 completed the task of suppressing the malcontents. William V was restored to all his former authority; and the hereditary stadholdership was formally declared to be an essential part of the constitution of the United Provinces. In the Treaty of Paris, October 27, France recognised these changes.

The chief gainer by these memorable events was undoubtedly England; and a grateful government rewarded the services of Sir James Harris with the title of Lord Malmesbury. But the immediate glory belonged to Prussia; and both Frederick William and Hertzberg were immensely elated at the ease with which so conspicuous a triumph had been gained. Hertzberg, the real author of Prussia's energetic action, believed that Prussia was now in a position to dictate its will to Europe; and this self-confidence led him into serious misconceptions and blunders. But

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in the meantime he had gained something besides glory, namely, an alliance with a first-rate Power. Frederick the Great had no such alliance in the last six years of his life, though he had found a substitute in the headship of a league of German Princes. But purely German politics had no great attraction for Hertzberg or for the new King. They were petty and parochial as compared with the great issues of international relations. Thus the *Fürstenbund*, though it still existed and displayed at this time a good deal of activity, was no longer keenly supported by Prussia; and the scheme of reforming the German constitution was allowed to drop. Prussia was engaged in what appeared to be a more promising scheme for realising its old object, the holding of Austria in check. Co-operation with England in the West might easily develop into common action in the East. The settlement of the Dutch constitution was a small matter compared with what might grow out of it. Strenuous negotiations at the Hague in the early months of 1788 resulted in the conclusion of a Triple Alliance between Prussia, Great Britain, and the United Provinces, by which the three Powers were pledged not only to mutual defence, but also to joint action "for preserving public tranquillity and for maintaining their common interests." The only sphere for such joint action at the time when the treaty was signed was in the East. The provisional treaty was signed at Loo on June 13, 1788, and was confirmed on August 13 at Berlin. Thus, at the moment when the first serious operations in Eastern Europe began, international relations assumed an intensely interesting character. On the one side were Austria and Russia engaged in an aggressive war against Turkey, and eager for a partition of Turkish territory. On the other side was the newly-formed Triple Alliance, determined to restore tranquillity on terms satisfactory to the interests of the allied Powers, and therefore opposed to any aggrandisement of either Russia or Austria. France, which might have decided the balance between the two coalitions, had lost all influence and prestige, and had for the moment ceased to be a great Power in Europe. No single event since the battle of Rossbach did so much to discredit the Bourbon monarchy as the passive acceptance by France of Prussian intervention in Holland.

Immense forces were prepared both by Austria and Russia for the campaign of 1788; and, although the Turks were inspired by religious fanaticism and had often displayed great tenacity in a defensive war, it was not expected that they could hold their own against so formidable a coalition. Joseph, who undertook the command in person, was confident that he would annex to his dominions not only Servia, which had been lost in 1739, but also Moldavia and Wallachia, and that Austria would henceforth be supreme on the Lower Danube. His primary object was the capture of Belgrade, which had already been treacherously attacked in the previous December before the declaration of war. Bitter dis-

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appointment awaited the Emperor. His early operations were intentionally dilatory, in order to allow the Russians time to co-operate. But to his astonishment Jussuf, the Grand Vizier, concentrated his main forces against the Austrians, and not only compelled Joseph to fall back from Belgrade, but followed him to the frontier of the Banat of Temeswar. There the Austrian army, seized by a disgraceful panic, abandoned the passes in disorder, and allowed the enemy to enter and ravage an Austrian province. Joseph himself returned to Vienna broken in health and spirits. The only set-off to his personal defeat was that Prince Josias of Coburg, in command of the left wing of his army, had established a strong position in Moldavia by the capture of the fortress of Choczim, and that the veteran Loudon, who was only employed as a last resource, signalised his return to active service by storming Dubitza in Bosnia. These successes compelled the Turks to evacuate the Banat before the winter.

One cause of the failure of the Austrian campaign in 1788, apart from military blunders and inefficiency, was that the Russians made far less strenuous exertions than had been anticipated. It was not till June that Potemkin appeared before Oczakoff, which offered the most obstinate resistance. After a siege of six months the town was carried by storm on December 17; and a terrible massacre avenged the losses which the besieging army had suffered before the walls. This, and a naval victory in the Black Sea which averted a Turkish attack upon the Crimea, were the only Russian successes in the year. Early in the campaign a large part of the Russian forces had to be recalled to meet an unexpected danger in the north. Gustavus III of Sweden took advantage of the Turkish war to demand from Russia in arrogant terms the restoration of Finland and Carelia. On Catharine's refusal he invaded Finland, while the Swedish fleet threatened to attack the Russian ships which had been collected at Cronstadt for an expedition to the Mediterranean. No preparations had been made for resistance to the Swedes; and for a moment panic reigned in St Petersburg. But the pressing danger disappeared as speedily as it had arisen. The Swedish officers, drawn from the noble class which had never forgiven the King for his *coup d'état* in 1772, took a mean revenge by open mutiny in the field. On the ground that the war had been falsely represented as one of defence, and that Gustavus was bound to consult the Diet before undertaking a war of aggression, they not only refused to advance, but offered Catharine an armistice by which Finland was evacuated. At sea, after an indecisive battle, the superior seamanship of Greig, the Russian admiral, succeeded in shutting up the Swedish ships in the harbour of Sveaborg. Gustavus himself was called home by the news that the Danes, at Russian instigation, had invaded Sweden from Norway, and were threatening Göteborg. The complete humiliation of Sweden was only averted by the action of the Triple Alliance. The threat that an English fleet would enter the

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Sound and a Prussian army invade Holstein was sufficient to compel Denmark to withdraw its army from Swedish soil and to observe thenceforward an attitude of strict neutrality. This action on the part of England is especially noteworthy as the first step taken by that country in open opposition to Russia.

It is impossible to do more than enumerate the most important events of the year 1789. Gustavus III took advantage of the popular indignation excited by the unpatriotic conduct of the nobles and by the Danish invasion to effect another revolution in the government of Sweden. When the Diet met in February, three of the Estates, the clergy, the towns, and the peasants, were enthusiastic for the King. Of the nobles, some were imprisoned for their mutiny in Finland, and the rest were coerced or intimidated into accepting a new constitution, which the King himself proposed to the assembly. Henceforth the King was to have supreme control of peace and war; and a considerable revenue was voted to him without limit of time. By this means Gustavus was enabled to continue the war and to return to the command of his army in Finland. But Sweden was no longer so formidable as in the seventeenth century, and no great successes were gained. The chief results of the northern war were that Russia was compelled to employ a considerable force in Finland, and that the Russian navy had to be concentrated in the Baltic. In spite of this diversion the allies were able to gain brilliant successes against the Turks. The death of the Sultan Abdul Hamid and the accession of Selim III led to the recall and the execution of the Grand Vizier who had so brilliantly defeated Joseph II in the previous year. His successor proved to be a man of very inferior ability; and the Turks suffered severely from the want of an efficient commander. The Prince of Coburg, supported by Suvóroff, inflicted a crushing defeat upon the main Turkish army on the Rimnik (September 22); and this victory materially aided Loudon in compelling Belgrade to surrender (October 9). Joseph II for the moment threw off his sickness to attend a service in St Stephen's in celebration of this signal triumph. Nor did success end here. Potemkin captured a number of fortresses, of which Bender was the most important. Coburg took Bucharest and occupied the passes into Wallachia; while Loudon reduced Semendria and blockaded Orsova. Although this blockade was to prove a serious hindrance, everything seemed prepared for an irresistible advance upon Turkey.

These military successes, however, were counterbalanced by rapidly increasing difficulties elsewhere. In Poland there was a strong and growing party which desired to take advantage of the eastern war to put an end to Russian ascendancy, and, as a necessary preliminary, to reform the anarchical constitution which Russia had resolutely set itself to uphold. Prussia, now that she was estranged from Russia, would be inclined to support the reforming projects which she had previously helped to defeat. So long as Catharine was engaged in war

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with both Turkey and Sweden, it would be difficult for her to employ an adequate force for the coercion of Poland. Still more serious were the problems with which Austria was confronted. Joseph's reforming activity had alienated in all his dominions both the nobles, who were deprived of the accustomed services of the peasants, and the clergy, who were subjected to unfamiliar State control. In Hungary, where the consciousness of separate racial and national interests had always created a spirit of antagonism to a German ruler, the hostility to the Emperor was peculiarly strong. In order to avoid taking an oath to observe the constitution, Joseph had refused on his accession to go through the ceremony of coronation at Pressburg; and he had outraged Hungarian sentiment by bringing the crown of St Stephen to Vienna. All his measures aimed at the incorporation of Hungary with the rest of his dominions under a single centralised administration. Sooner than be Germanised under an absolute ruler, the Magyars were prepared to rise in insurrection; and in 1789 such a rebellion, with the prospect of Prussian encouragement and aid, would have been peculiarly formidable.

It was in the Netherlands, however, that Joseph II met with the most open and uncompromising opposition. The pacification in the spring of 1788 proved very short-lived, as nothing had been done to remove the radical divergence between the aims of the ruler and the wishes of his subjects. The Bishops insisted that the education of priests belonged exclusively to the clergy, and denounced the teaching of the professors in the new seminary of Louvain as heretical. Joseph on his side closed the episcopal seminaries at Malines and Antwerp. The Provinces, and especially Brabant, were resolute to maintain their old-established privileges and institutions; while the Emperor was equally eager to destroy everything which weakened the unity of the State and the efficient exercise of monarchical authority. In 1789 a quarrel between the sovereign and the Estates of Brabant brought matters to a crisis. The Third Estate refused to assent to a demand for subsidies; and Joseph proposed to reform its composition by admitting delegates from other towns besides the three principal cities, which had an exclusive right of representation. From one point of view this was a liberal and popular measure; but from another it could be regarded as merely intended to give the Crown a preponderant influence. The Council of Brabant refused to sanction a change in the constitution, made merely by royal Edict without being submitted to the Estates. The Estates were equally resolute in opposing a measure which had been proposed without consulting them, and was accompanied by a demand for a permanent revenue.

This struggle in Brussels was contemporary with the early meetings of the States General in Versailles. The Third Estate of Brabant was the champion of conservatism and of obsolete privileges, of the social

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and political system which the French Third Estate sought to destroy; while Joseph represented in many ways the progressive spirit of the eighteenth century. But the profound differences between the two movements were forgotten in the superficial resemblance; and every concession extorted from Louis XVI served to encourage the opposition to Joseph II. The Emperor, who regarded his brother-in-law's misfortunes as the merited result of discreditable weakness, was determined to pursue a wholly different course. On June 18 he did in Brabant what in January he had already done in Hainault; he dissolved the recalcitrant Estates and cancelled the "Joyous Entry" together with all the ancient liberties of the Province. General d'Alton congratulated his sovereign that the 18th of June, the anniversary of the battle of Kolin, also saw the establishment of his sovereignty in the Netherlands. A policy of rigorous coercion was now pursued. The amnesty which had been granted in the previous year was revoked; and those who had been active in the work of opposition sought safety by a hasty flight across the Dutch frontier. At Breda a committee of the leading exiles undertook the task of organising resistance to military tyranny and of appealing for support to foreign countries. Even before the final rupture van der Noot had sounded the States of the Triple Alliance. In London he had received little attention, as the Ministers were absorbed in the disputes about the Regency during the King's illness. But both in Berlin and the Hague there was a strong desire to hamper Austria by encouraging disaffection. The Dutch were especially eager to punish Joseph II for his attitude both before and during their recent troubles. He had endeavoured to open the Scheldt; and, although he did not actually intervene in the strife of parties, he would certainly have supported France if that country had been able to oppose the Prussians. He had throughout encouraged the anti-Orange faction and had sheltered its leaders in the Netherlands after their defeat. Several of these leaders were intimately associated with d'Alton, the commander of the Austrian forces; and it was thought that a complete triumph of Joseph's policy in the Netherlands might endanger the recent settlement in the United Provinces.

Meanwhile the fate of the Netherlands depended entirely upon the ability of the military forces to restrain the general discontent from breaking out into open rebellion. D'Alton had some 18,000 men at his disposal, and assured his master that they were sufficient for the purpose. But it would in any case have been difficult for Joseph to send reinforcements. He could not withdraw troops from Turkey; and he could not weaken his forces in Hungary and the other Provinces without serious risk. And, even if he resolved on either step, it required considerable time to transfer any considerable body of men to the western Provinces. In October the preparations of the exiles were complete; and two thousand men under van der Mersch, formerly an officer in the imperial service,

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crossed the frontier into Brabant. In itself the force was contemptible both in numbers and equipment; but it was rendered formidable by the sympathy and support of the people. In the open field it might have been easily crushed; but within a town its fighting power was not inconsiderable, especially as the Austrian troops were scattered over a large area and could not concentrate in large numbers at any point. At Turnhout, where the first encounter took place, the regulars were completely routed and compelled to withdraw. In Ghent, the chief city of Flanders, a similar victory of the mob resulted in the expulsion of the garrison. The Flemings declared themselves independent of Austrian rule, and called upon the other Provinces to combine in organising a federal republic. It was in vain that Trautmansdorf issued edicts annulling the recent unpopular measures, and that Joseph sent Philip Cobenzl with authority to adopt a conciliatory policy. The Church threw the whole of its vast influence on the side of the rebels; all proposals for a compromise were rejected; and, after a successful rebellion in Brussels (December 10), the Austrian troops were withdrawn from Brabant to Luxemburg, the only Province which remained loyal. In January, 1790, delegates from the provincial Estates met at Brussels and drew up a federal Constitution for a Belgian Republic. The chief Ministers of the federation were van der Noot and van Eupen, who represented the alliance of the secular opposition with the interests of the Roman Catholic Church. The impotence of Austria to put down so serious a rebellion, though due in the first place to the Turkish war, was much increased by contemporary events in France. Not only was the Franco-Austrian alliance practically abolished by the progress of the French Revolution, but the acts of the National Assembly had already injured interests in Germany which the Emperor was bound by his office to defend. Thus France, instead of supporting the Austrian cause in the Netherlands, encouraged and aided the Belgian revolution. Although the two movements, the one radical and the other conservative, were essentially divergent from each other, their momentary alliance is reflected in the name given by Camille Desmoulins to his famous periodical, *Les Révolutions de France et de Brabant.*

It is obvious at a glance that these events in Belgium, combined with the disaffection in Hungary and the other Austrian dominions, enormously strengthened the Triple Alliance in its antagonism to Austria and Russia. Prussia, which regarded itself as the leading Power of the coalition, was naturally eager to take full advantage of the favourable combination of circumstances to bring about the humiliation of Austria. The policy advocated by Hertzberg was avowedly based upon imitation of Frederick II's action at the time of the First Partition of Poland. The great King had then avoided the expense and the risks of war; but his masterly diplomacy had taken advantage of a war in the East to gain for Prussia a valuable extension of territory. Hertzberg believed that

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he could gain a similar end by similar means. By acting as mediator Prussia could dictate its will to the belligerent States. The Turks, defeated by superior force, must make considerable cessions to Austria. Austria, however, weakened by events elsewhere, must not enlarge her territories without regard to the Balance of Power. In return for her acquisitions on the Danube, she must resign to Poland the whole or part of Galicia; and the grateful Poles were to reward Prussia for advocating their interests by the cession of Danzig and Thorn, which would round off the Prussian gains of 1772 and also give Prussia complete control of the Vistula. The precise details of the scheme as advocated by Hertzberg varied with the fluctuations of the eastern war and of other events; but its main features were always the same — Prussian ascendancy in arranging a general pacification, the avoidance of actual war, and the acquisition of Danzig and Thorn. The obvious weakness of the policy was that it demanded the concurrence of too many favourable contingencies. The Turks must be sufficiently humbled, but yet saved from annihilation; the Poles must be willing to make the desired exchange of Danzig and Thorn for Galicia; Austria must be induced to make sacrifices in order to recover its rebellious Provinces and to avoid worse disasters; and above all Prussia must receive the strenuous and loyal support of its allies.

Hertzberg's plan, though it is the most prominent thread in the tangled diplomacy of 1789, was by no means the only course open to Prussia. A far bolder and more aggressive policy was advocated in Berlin and by Prussian agents at foreign Courts, especially by Diez at Constantinople. This was to form a vast coalition, including not only the Maritime Powers, but also Sweden, Poland, and the chief States of Germany. As the head of this coalition, Prussia might undertake to champion the cause of the Turks, and could dictate its will to Austria and Russia. Poland would be freed from Russian control and erected into a permanent barrier against Russian advance towards the west while Turkey would continue to serve as a barrier in the south. Austria could be compelled to give up Galicia, could be, if necessary, deprived of the Netherlands, and in any case would be compelled to submit to Prussian ascendancy in the affairs of Germany. Both schemes had much to recommend them. That of Hertzberg had the merit of avoiding actual hostilities; but the other opened more grandiose and alluring prospects for Prussian ambition. For many months Frederick William II hesitated between the two alternatives. At one time he was almost pledged to the support of Hertzberg; but in the early months of 1790 steps were taken by Prussia which made immediate war with Austria almost inevitable. On January 30 Diez, who had always advocated active assistance to the Turks, concluded a treaty of alliance with the Porte. Prussia was to assist the Turks to recover both their losses in the present war and also the Crimea, whereas all that Turkey undertook

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was to endeavour to obtain in the final treaty of peace the Austrian cession of Galicia. Diez was finally recalled (May, 1790) and the ratification postponed; but the treaty was in the end confirmed with the omission of the clause about the Crimea. A little later an alliance was made with Poland, by which Prussia was to defend that State against attack (March 29). Prussian troops were mobilised in Silesia on the very frontier of the Austrian dominions. Loudon had to be recalled from Turkey to undertake the defence of Bohemia and Moravia. Frederick William was willing to acknowledge the Belgian Republic, and allowed Prussian officers to assume the command of its forces. Relations were also established with the Hungarian malcontents, who were encouraged to rebel by the prospect of foreign intervention. Galicia was ready to take up arms and to demand reincorporation with Poland.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the issues that were at stake in the early months of 1790. If Prussia had carried out a bellicose policy, all the Powers of Europe, except perhaps the Bourbon and the Italian States, would have been engaged in a gigantic contest on the Eastern Question. Such a contest would in itself have involved momentous consequences, which it is needless and impossible to forecast. But its indirect results must have been no less weighty. European intervention in France would have been impossible; and the French Revolution, without the enormous influence exerted by the struggle with foreign States, must have run a wholly different course. It is therefore a matter of no small interest to form a clear conception of the causes which averted a general conflagration in the East, and by bringing about a temporary reconciliation between Austria and Prussia rendered possible their joint action against France.

The extreme confidence of Prussia, which was one of the chief dangers to European peace, rested very largely upon the successful intervention in the United Provinces and upon the Triple Alliance which had been formed as its result. Hitherto the one overt act of the alliance had been the coercion of Denmark; and, when it was tested by the possibility of active interference in the East, the unity of aim and interest among the allies proved to be very incomplete. For practical purposes the alliance consisted of England and Prussia, as Holland was ready to follow the guidance of its powerful neighbour; and men spoke once more of "the Maritime Powers" as if they were a single unit in European affairs. Nothing can be clearer or more distinct than the main lines of Pitt's policy in Eastern affairs. He desired to check Russian aggression, and therefore to oppose and weaken Austria as the ally of Russia. So far his aims were identical with those of Prussia. He wished to prevent the war from spreading, and to play the part of a mediator, not of a principal in the struggle. But as regards the provisions of peace he altogether parted company with Hertzberg and his great scheme. He had no intention of serving as a cat's-paw for Prussia, and was not

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in the least inclined to allow the general pacification to be impeded or delayed by what seemed to him an unreasonable demand for Danzig and Thorn. Why should the cession of territory from Poland to Prussia form part of a treaty between Russia and Austria on one side and Turkey on the other? The answer that Prussia desired it was inadequate. British diplomatists were instructed to make it perfectly clear that their government desired peace on the simple basis of the *status quo ante bellum*. Pitt was also opposed to Prussian policy with regard to the Belgian Republic. Only recently England had had good reason to complain of the action of European States in giving their recognition to the rebellious colonies in America. It would have been too glaring an inconsistency to employ the same weapon against another State after so bitterly denouncing its use. There were other reasons tending in the same direction. A republic in Belgium might easily fall a victim to French influence or French aggression; or Austria, threatened with the complete loss of the Netherlands, might be willing to purchase French aid by the cession of the whole or part to France. In either case the interests of Great Britain and Holland would suffer.

Besides this divergence of aim between the two States, which seriously hampered Prussia, the growing interest attaching to events in France tended to avert a great war in the East. Austria and Prussia, as rivals for the chief influence in Germany, could not possibly disregard the reasonable demands of German Princes for compensation on account of the property or the lucrative rights of which they were deprived by the edicts of a French assembly. But these demands must certainly remain unsatisfied if Austria and Prussia went to war with each other.

The death of Joseph II (February 20, 1790) also made for peace. Few reigns have had a more tragic end. His one guiding motive was devotion to the interests of his State; and he lived to see that State on the verge of disruption and ruin. Although the early disasters had been redeemed by brilliant victories, the Turkish war could hardly bring any lasting gain to Austria. And yet it had exhausted his resources, had alienated his subjects, and had given almost overwhelming advantages to the rival State which he had so keenly desired to hu[illegible]
Everything had failed in his hands. His best and his worst acti[illegible]
equally brought misfortune to his country. Perhaps his greatest [illegible]
was rendered by his death. That event saved Austria from [illegible]
which could hardly have been averted if his life had been pro[illegible]
The concessions and changes of policy, which Joseph could not [illegible]
have made without losing all credit and authority, could come wi[illegible]
paratively good grace from his brother and successor. Leopold
peculiarly well fitted to deal with the very complicated difficultie
position. He had been for twenty-five years a popular and su
ruler in Tuscany, and he had always been a keenly attentive stu
European politics. He had acquired in Italy some of the subtle

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and adroitness which have always characterised the ablest Italian politicians. His long detachment from Vienna had freed him from many prejudices and personal relations which might otherwise have hampered or misled him. Even Kaunitz found in the new ruler a master rather than a pupil.

Leopold II did not live long enough to justify a claim to be regarded as a consummate statesman, but he certainly achieved much during the two years that he ruled in Austria. His primary aim was to avoid a war with Prussia. If that could be done without humiliating concessions, he might confidently hope to put down disaffection in Hungary and to recover the Netherlands. To gain his end he had two strong cards to play. He was prepared to abandon the close alliance with Russia which Joseph had concluded; and he could argue that, as that alliance had been the origin of all trouble in the East, so its termination should remove all obstacles in the way of general peace. He also firmly grasped the fact that Great Britain was not in complete accord with Prussia, and that of the two allies Great Britain was primarily hostile to Russia, whereas Prussian hostility was mainly directed against Austria. To conciliate Britain by a parade of moderation was the best and most certain method of disarming Prussia. Nor was Leopold slow to perceive the immense advantage which he had in dealing with so impulsive and vacillating a ruler as Frederick William II. The Prussian King had gone so far on the way towards war, that he could not withdraw without incurring dishonour and the imputation of treacherous dealing. Yet he allowed himself to be drawn by an adroit personal appeal into negotiations in which he was ultimately outwitted.

It would take too long to trace in detail the relations between Austria and Prussia from Leopold's letter to Frederick William on March 25, 1790, to the diplomatic conference which was opened at Reichenbach on June 27. It was at the Prussian head-quarters in Silesia that the Austrian envoy, Spielmann, met with Hertzberg to arrange terms of peace. As between Austria and Prussia there was no insuperable objection to some readjustment of Polish and Turkish territory; and Hertzberg had confident hopes of carrying through his original scheme. But in the course of three weeks the difficulties in the way were found to be insuperable. The Turks, who could appeal to their unfulfilled treaty with Prussia, would not agree to restore to Austria the boundary of Passarowitz. Poland, another ally of Prussia, would hear nothing of the cession of Danzig and Thorn. To persist in the demands meant the alienation of two States whose support was one essential element in the strength of the Prussian position. Finally the representatives of the Maritime States, amply satisfied with the severance of Austria from Russia, declared decisively in favour of the *status quo* as against any scheme of territorial exchanges. Hertzberg's project was decisively abandoned by the Prussian King; and the interchange of a number of

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declarations, ratified on July 27, constituted the Convention of Reichenbach. The gist of the agreement was that Austria should grant an immediate armistice to the Turks and open negotiations for a treaty which should restore matters as they were before the war. If, however, Austria obtained any concession, it must be freely granted by the Porte; and Prussia was entitled to claim some equivalent advantage. So long as war continued between Russia and Turkey, Austria was to remain in occupation of Choczim, but was pledged to give no assistance to the Russians. As regards the Netherlands, Austrian authority was to be restored; but an amnesty was promised, and the Provinces were to recover their old constitutions under the guarantee of Prussia and the Maritime Powers.

The Convention of Reichenbach marks a turning-point in the history of Europe. The extreme tension of the last few months was relaxed. The decisive struggle between Austria and Prussia was postponed for three-quarters of a century. Austria escaped from the most serious crisis through which she had passed since the accession of Maria Theresa. Prussia stepped down from the commanding position she had occupied since the death of Frederick the Great. The Austro-Russian alliance was at an end; and the Triple Alliance, which it had provoked, was on the verge of dissolution. Finally, the way was prepared for a new adjustment of European relations by the formation of a coalition against France.

Leopold II had scored a diplomatic triumph of no ordinary magnitude. He had obtained terms which under the circumstances were the best he could hope for; and he had contrived to obtain them in such a way that the allies congratulated themselves on having induced Austria to consent. He now set himself, with equal subtlety, to minimise the stipulated intervention of the mediating Powers in the negotiations both with the Turks and with his rebellious subjects. He relied upon the confident belief that, so long as Pitt cherished the desire to oppose Russia, the English government would do nothing that might drive Austria once more into the Russian alliance. In the winter of 1790 a Congress met at Sistova to arrange a final treaty with the Turks. If Leopold had adhered to the letter of his agreement at Reichenbach, the proceedings would have been very short. But he drew an unforseen distinction between the *status quo de jure* and *de facto*, and claimed Orsova on the ground that it ought to have belonged to Austria before the war. The result was that the negotiations were prolonged; and for a time the Congress was broken up. It was not till August 4, 1791, that the Treaty of Sistova was formally concluded. By the public articles the former boundaries were restored; but by a separate convention the Porte agreed to the cession of Orsova and a strip of territory in Croatia, on condition that the fortifications of the former should be destroyed. England made no protest; and Prussia, where Hertzberg's policy had been completely

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abandoned, made no effort to obtain the equivalent upon which so much stress had been laid at Reichenbach.

Before the conclusion of this treaty, Leopold had restored his authority in the Austrian dominions. He conciliated his subjects by revoking the general land-tax which Joseph had imposed, and by abandoning his predecessor's policy of administrative uniformity and centralisation. So long as the monarchy had an adequate revenue and supreme control over military and foreign affairs, Leopold was willing to allow each province to retain its own customs and languages. Although the Hungarians were on the verge of rebellion when he came to the throne, he summoned the Hungarian Diet which had not met for nearly fifty years. To the demands, which were made for further restrictions on the royal power, he opposed a firm assertion that he would make no change in the coronation oath which had been taken by Maria Theresa. In November, 1790, he proceeded to Pressburg, and of his own accord promulgated a law that every future King should be crowned within six months of his accession. As Joseph II had refused the ceremony altogether, this was received as a great concession to national sentiment. The susceptible Magyars welcomed their new sovereign with enthusiasm, abandoned their distasteful demands for a new capitulation, and voted a large addition to the revenue.

About the same time a settlement was effected of the more serious difficulties in the Netherlands. There the whole conditions had been altered since Reichenbach. The Belgians had lost all hope of foreign support. The military weakness of Austria, to which the rebels owed their success in the previous year, was at an end so soon as the agreement with Prussia and the armistice with the Turks gave Leopold the free disposal of the Austrian troops. Moreover the newly created Republic was torn by internal dissensions. The ascendancy of the clerical and reactionary politicians, like van der Noot and van Eupen, who had headed the resistance to Joseph's reforms, was disputed by a growing democratic party which derived its principles from France. French emissaries were active in encouraging this party to demand a free national assembly; and the Congress in Brussels had to employ force in order to put down the malcontents. Leopold was already assured of success when he offered to restore the liberties of the Austrian Netherlands as they had been before the late reign, and demanded that they should return to their allegiance to himself. Unless these terms were accepted by November 21, his troops in Luxemburg, strengthened by large reinforcements, were prepared to compel submission by force of arms. The republican leaders made a vain effort to obtain better terms. They demanded that their privileges should be those which they had enjoyed under Charles VI, and appealed to the envoys of the allies, who were assembled at the Hague for the purpose of mediation. Prussia and the Maritime Powers were not unwilling to obtain all reasonable concessions for the Belgians, whose

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rebellion had for a time strengthened their hands, and asked for a prolongation of the armistice to allow time for further discussion. Leopold, however, adhered to his ultimatum, and refused to listen to a last proposal from Brussels to confer the sovereignty on his third son, the Archduke Charles. On November 22 the Austrian troops commenced their advance, and within a week they were before Brussels. Resistance was impossible. Van der Noot and his colleagues fled, the Congress dissolved itself, and the Belgian Republic was at an end. Meanwhile the Congress at the Hague had drawn up a Convention, guaranteeing the Constitution of the Netherlands as it had been in the reign of Charles VI. The Austrian envoy signed it on December 10. But Leopold refused his ratification, and the Convention remained a dead letter. The allies were chagrined that their mediation was thus slighted; but they did not go beyond empty protests. In the Netherlands, as in the negotations with Turkey, Leopold succeeded in asserting his independence of external control. He took all the gain of the Convention of Reichenbach, and evaded all that was distasteful in its provisions.

The desertion of Austria had been a serious blow to Catharine II. Russia was left alone, not merely to carry on the war with Sweden and Turkey, but also to face the less active hostility of the Triple Alliance and the growing boldness of the anti-Russian party in Poland. And Reichenbach opened the possibility of an approximation between Austria and Prussia, which would destroy the very foundation on which Russian ascendancy had hitherto rested. Catharine, however, showed equal courage and resource in meeting the first serious difficulties she had encountered since her accession. As soon as she learned with certainty that Austria would come to terms with the allies, she sent an offer of peace to Gustavus III. Sweden had proved a fair match for Russia in naval warfare; and Gustavus had recently won a brilliant victory. But his revenue was exhausted; and he could not carry on the war much longer. He felt flattered that his formidable opponent should be the first to offer terms; and the terms themselves, a return to the condition of things before the war, were precisely those which the allies were willing to demand for Sweden. His increasing desire to champion the falling monarchy in France made him eager for peace; and the Treaty of Werelå was hastily concluded on August 15, 1790.

This was a great blow to England and Prussia, who were preparing to assist Gustavus with money and ships. They had relied upon Swedish aid in putting pressure upon Russia, and now discovered that in case of war Sweden might actually be a Russian ally. At the same time the Russians continued their exertions against Turkey, though the odds against them were increased by the Austrian armistice. The famous storming of Ismail by Suvóroff took place towards the close of 1790. Catharine, therefore, was undismayed when she received formal notice from England and Prussia of the Convention of Reichenbach, together

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with an urgent representation that she should, either of her own accord or through the medium of the allies, make peace with the Turks on the same terms as had been accepted in principle by the Emperor. Behind the representation was the implied threat that the allies were prepared to use force to compel the acceptance of their demand. It was obvious that Catharine could not carry out the original designs of Potemkin. There could be for the present no expulsion of the Turks from Europe, no Greek Empire at Constantinople, and no intermediate Christian kingdom in the Balkan peninsula. But her haughty temper forbade the acceptance of a mandate; and she was not content to emerge empty-handed from an expensive and successful war. She made it known that she was willing to make peace, but that she would retain Oczakoff on the Dniester, which had cost Potemkin so prolonged an effort in 1788.

The allies insisted that as Austria had accepted the *status quo ante bellum*, and, as the same concession had been given to Sweden, it was contrary to equity to allow Russia to extend its power at the expense of Turkey. A great deal was said of the immense importance of Oczakoff, which has since fallen into decay, and of the advantage which its possession as a fortress would give to Russia in any later war with Turkey. In March, 1791, Prussia once more collected her forces, and the English government demanded supplies for the equipment of a naval expedition to the Baltic. The two Powers drew up and actually despatched to St Petersburg an ultimatum, to which an answer was required within ten days. For the second time within twelve months a great European war seemed about to begin on the Eastern Question. In 1790 it was Prussia which gave way at the critical moment, in 1791 it was England. The precise motives which induced Pitt, in the first place to attach so much importance to the restoration of Oczakoff, and in the second place to change his mind with such rapidity, have been a subject of much discussion. But there can be no doubt that he believed at first that a resolute attitude would compel Russia to give way, and that he was suddenly convinced that in the face of parliamentary opposition and public indifference so resolute an attitude could not be maintained. A special messenger was in time to prevent the presentation of the ultimatum; the Foreign Secretary resigned; and Pitt had to explain to the Prussian King the peculiar difficulty of carrying on a strenuous foreign policy in a country blest with parliamentary institutions. Polite representations were not likely to succeed when bluster had been so feeble; and Catharine had her own way. On August 11, 1791, the preliminaries of peace with Turkey were signed at Galatz, and on January 9, 1792, they were confirmed at Jassy. Potemkin, to whose influence the whole war was largely due, had died in the autumn of 1791. The question of the partition or preservation of Turkey ceased for the moment to be a disturbing force in Europe; but events in France and in Poland led to other and more serious troubles.

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CHAPTER XII

THE TERROR

THE *coup d'état* of June 2, 1793, had been accomplished by a union of three distinct interests, all with one immediate object — the elimination of the Gironde — but each with a totally different ulterior design. That of Danton and the Dantonist Committee of Public Safety had been simply to put the Girondins on one side, because they were an obstacle to strong government; now that this had been done, any further proceedings against the fallen party were quite opposed to their wishes. On the other hand the Robespierrists and *enragés* of the Convention would not be content with the results of the *coup d'état* until their rivals had been not only suspended but proscribed and destroyed. Their aim being not a strong government but a Jacobin government, they regarded the Girondins as an obstacle to their own political future, and were determined to remove them once for all from their path. Like the Dantonists, however, they desired to keep the profit of the insurrection for the Convention, and to protect the Assembly from further molestation. But, as had so often before happened in the course of the Revolution, they had employed, to effect their ends, an intruding and usurping force, whose tyranny they were now unable to shake off; the agent employed on this occasion had been the Commune, whose conception of the ultimate ends of the *coup d'état* differed *toto cœlo* from those of both Dantonists and Robespierrists. The Commune was in the hands of Hébert, Chaumette, and their fellows, men who, using the vilest means, preached the downfall of religion and property, and advocated a policy of sheer atheism, anarchy, and pillage. These men had borne the main burden of the insurrection, and not unnaturally expected to reap the reward of their exertions as soon as their allies of the Convention could put the lives and properties of respectable citizens at their mercy by the introduction of predatory legislation. The *coup d'état* had in fact been as much a victory for the Commune over the Convention as for the Jacobins and Dantonists over the Gironde. It is indeed their apprehension of this result that explains the lukewarm attitude adopted during the crisis by the Committee of Public Safety.

At first it seemed that the Dantonists might be able to establish

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their interpretation of the *coup d'état*. The mild and maternal suspension which they designed for the Girondins was put in force; the twenty-nine suspended deputies were merely put under guard in their own houses, even allowed to walk about Paris under supervision, while the two suspended ministers (Clavière and Lebrun), similarly guarded, actually continued for three weeks to execute their ministerial functions, being no doubt far more in sympathy with Danton's conciliatory policy than were Desforgues and Destournelles, who ultimately (June 21) succeeded them. The Dantonist *régime* was also inaugurated in the armies by the appointment of Custine to the command of the Army of the North, of Beauharnais to that of the Rhine, and of Biron to that of the Vendée. On June 7 the Committee took a further step, proposing that the lives of the suspended deputies should be guaranteed by hostages, drawn from the Convention and sent by that body to the various constituencies. This fantastic proposal, however, provoked so great an outcry, that both it and a suggestion for a new *Commandant* of the National Guard had to be dropped.

While the Committee of Public Safety had been thus busy in putting its own construction on the events of June 2, the Commune had not been idle. On the very day of the insurrection it had put forward demands for the formation of a "Revolutionary Army" for internal use, for the immediate and general enforcement of the *maximum*, and for the levying of the forced loan on the "rich"; and on June 3 it had appointed a Committee to promote cheapness of provisions. It was backed in all these demands by the Jacobins, who did not want to lose the alliance of the Commune before the extinction of the Girondins had been completed, and whose programme therefore, as disclosed by Chabot and Billaud at the club, was for the present identical with that of the Commune. The fact that Bouchotte, the War Minister, was a nominee of Hébert, and was able, though at the expense of efficiency, to enlist the armies on his side by the dissemination of anarchical literature, told heavily in favour of the Commune. It now seemed probable that, in spite of the ascendancy of the Dantonists, matters would soon turn to the profit of the Hôtel de Ville, when a series of reactionary outbreaks gave pause to the advocates of anarchy.

The seat of the most serious of these outbreaks was Lyons, which city, as the greatest commercial centre in France, had long, and not without reason, provoked the jealousy of the Parisian demagogues. The economic disturbance due to the Revolution had brought ruin to its prosperous industries, the decline in the silk industry alone throwing 30,000 labourers out of work. These unemployed, who were not pampered as in Paris by cheap bread, and whose reasonable application for a bounty to support their failing industry was refused, were disgusted with the Revolutionary government and inclined to favour any form of reaction. After August 10, 1792, Commissioners — among them Boissy

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d'Anglas — had been sent to Lyons, and their reports made it clear that an outbreak might be expected at any moment. The Jacobin Club had of course a powerful branch at Lyons, and had got the mastery of the local Commune; but the Mayor, Nivière-Chol, was a Moderate; and when, in consequence of certain tumults, domiciliary visits were ordered (January 20, 1793) and 150 persons thrown into prison (February 4), he applied to the Department for troops. The Commune opposed him, and he resigned (February 7), but was succeeded by another Moderate. At the end of February the reactionaries again triumphed and Nivière-Chol was reinstated. In consequence of this the Convention (February 25) nominated Rovère, Bazire, and Legendre, to go to Lyons. Arriving there on March 2, they set up a local Committee of Public Safety, quashed the recent elections, and caused Challier, the most prominent of the local Jacobins, to be elected Mayor. Notwithstanding this, the Commissioners continued to complain in their reports of the "incivic" tone of the city. On May 10 a fresh batch of Commissioners arrived, at the head of whom was Dubois-Crancé, and they at once joined with the local Commune and Jacobin Club to impose on the poverty-stricken city a loan of 6,000,000 *livres* and a levy for the Vendée. When Challier threatened to carry out these measures by force, the Moderate National Guard assembled, stormed the municipal buildings, killed 200 "patriots," and threw Challier and others into prison. Lyons was thus already up in arms before June 2, and refused entrance to Robert Lindet, who brought the news of the *coup d'état*, not because it resented the arrest of the Girondins, but because of the previous measures of the government and especially because of the forced loan and levy. Lyons therefore now lay armed and minatory, waiting to see what the government would do.

At Marseilles also the Girondist Rebecqui had obtained the expulsion of the Convention Commissioners; and after June 2 a battalion of volunteers was formed to march on Paris. At Bordeaux there was even greater clamour; the Conventional Commissioners were ejected, a local Committee of Public Safety established, and representatives sent all over France to denounce the *coup d'état*. At the same time Normandy declared against the Convention and commenced to prepare an army to march on the capital.

Meanwhile the insurrection in the West was growing in vigour. After their successes in March the insurgents had disbanded for Easter, and some ground was gained by the Republicans; but on April 30 a fresh rendezvous at Cholet of 30,000 men resulted after a series of battles in the clearing of the Bocage, and on May 5 the *Vendéens* laid siege to Thouars, a strongly fortified town far out in the Plaine on the road to Saumur. Its fall, accomplished by the heroism of de Lescure and de La Rochejaquelein, brought the insurgents much needed supplies of arms and ammunition. May 9 and 13 saw the fall of Parthenay and of La Châtaigneraie, and on May 16 the army attacked Fontenay, the

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chef-lieu of the Department. The attack was repulsed, but, with a persistence rare in irregular troops, was renewed on May 20; and, after a desperate battle, in which both generals and soldiers displayed the most superb courage, the Republicans were routed with great slaughter, and Fontenay, lying on the borders of Plaine and Bocage, fell into the hands of the Royalists. Masters of the Plaine eastward of the Bocage, they now pushed on towards the Loire; and on June 10 a brilliant assault compelled Saumur to surrender. This success, which gave access to the right bank of the Loire, was of first-rate importance. It now became necessary for the *Vendéen* leaders to decide on their future lines of action. They determined on the boldest course — one which, had it succeeded (and it did all but succeed), would have shaken the Republic to its foundations. They decided to spread the revolt through Britanny, Normandy, and Maine, districts which they rightly regarded as well affected, and to march at the head of a united North-West against Paris itself. Such a scheme may appear foolhardy, but at the time there seemed but one obstacle to its realisation — the presence in rear of the army of the important and unblockaded seaport town of Nantes, where feeling ran high in favour of the Republic.

The insurgent leaders saw that the capture of Nantes must be the first step towards the realisation of their plans. Appointing Cathelineau commander-in-chief they advanced, some 30,000 strong, down both banks of the Loire; Angers and Ancenis surrendered without a shot fired, and on June 29 the outskirts of Nantes were reached. Charette, who, in spite of numerous repulses, had by the middle of May made himself practically master of the Marais, was able to co-operate from the south. Thus the toils closed round the city; everywhere, in Paris, in the insurgent army, in Nantes itself, capitulation was hourly expected. But it was now to be proved that courage and devotion were not the monopoly of the insurgents. Undismayed by the apparently desperate situation, unmoved by unanimous counsels of surrender, Baco, the Mayor, declared with intrepid resolution that he would resist to the death. In the few days at his disposal he put the unfortified town into a state of defence, cut the bridges, blockaded the streets, and inspired the citizens with his own courage. The insurgents after all laboured under serious disadvantages; lacking artillery, they could only hope to carry the city by assault, in which they must needs be greatly hampered by the difficulty of co-operation between their scattered forces. What the assault lacked in combination, however, vigour and gallantry amply supplied. At 7 a.m. on the 29th a struggle commenced, quite Homeric in its incidents of personal valour. The besiegers were unable to gain a footing in the town, and at last, at 4 p.m., Cathelineau, heading a final desperate onslaught, received a mortal wound. The *Vendéens*, with all the sensitiveness of raw troops, fell back. The crisis of the war was over, and the Republic was saved.

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But it was not in the Provinces alone that signs of reaction were showing themselves; in Paris itself all but the very scum of the population dreaded the incendiary legislation which seemed to be impending and the consequent perpetuation of insecurity. Twenty-seven of the Sections protested in no measured terms against the formation of the Revolutionary Army, with the result that that item in the Jacobin programme was shelved. The Committee of Public Safety desired to suppress the reactionary outbreaks by mild and conciliatory measures, and was even ready to amnesty the rebels if the extremists could be persuaded to allow it. The Committee had on June 7 gone so far as to cashier Hanriot and dissolve the Revolutionary Committees of the Sections, but the outcry of the extremists caused them to draw back. Danton himself, although in his speeches he continued to pander to the lowest tastes of the proletariate, in order to secure the support of the Hébertists, in his heart desired that the attacks on property and order should cease; and now, in face of the numerous signs of reaction, the extremists found it necessary to temporise and to allay the fears of the *bourgeois* by the postponement of their predatory schemes. With this object on June 24 a new Constitution, introduced by Hérault, was passed; but, as it was never intended to come into operation, being merely a manifesto to propitiate the *bourgeoisie*, its enforcement was postponed "until the peace." This dummy Constitution was purposely Dantonist in tone, and in it all predatory suggestions were carefully suppressed; the clause on property simply asserted that society was bound to support the poor either by work or alms, and the clause on foreign relations, though it accepted Marat's dictum that "all free peoples were allies," was careful to lay down the neo-Dantonist doctrine of non-intervention.

This temporising on the part of the Mountain provoked a fierce outburst of anger from its extreme supporters. These men, Varlet, Roux, Leclerc, Desfieux, Proly, and a host of others drawn from the very dregs of the population and moved only by a desire for disorder and plunder, had been the heart and soul of the recent insurrection. They detested the moderation of the Constitution, and on June 25 and 26 laid their complaints before the Convention and the Commune. Meeting however with scant encouragement from either, they set to work to plunder on their own account; and for two days Paris was freely pillaged without interference on the part of the authorities, the rioters being finally appeased only by the distribution amongst them of a large sum of money from the Treasury; after which the Constitution was proclaimed and couriers despatched to communicate it to the Departments, where on the whole it was favourably received.

It was now, however, plain to the Committee, even to Danton himself, that the plans for conciliation were doomed to failure. It required a man of all Danton's resolution and intrepidity to advocate, after a

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past so bloody and violent, a return to order and moderation; it would have required a man of even more sagacity and persistence than his to carry out such a policy. To men of the cowardly type of Robespierre, the fear that the restoration of moderate and equable government would be the signal for vengeance on them for their innumerable crimes overpowered every other feeling, so that they were pledged to further violence by that most powerful incentive, the fear of retribution. The policy of compromise advocated by Danton was thus utterly abhorrent to the extreme party; the peace which he preached would involve the prompt execution of the leading Jacobins; the retention of Custine meant the impeachment of Bouchotte; an amnesty to Lyons, for which Danton was eager, would hand over the "patriots" of that city to a just and certain retribution. So the Jacobins came to regard Danton as a man dangerous to their very lives, and, with the instinct of self-preservation, they prepared to strike at him.

On July 8 a report of the Committee of Public Safety on the suspended Girondins was read. It proposed the proscription of nine of the fugitive deputies, the impeachment of five others, and the reinstatement of the remainder. Severe as it seems, it was in reality the last helpless cry of the conciliatory spirit in face of the advance of inevitable tyranny and terror; and its moderation was at once made the pretext for the downfall of Danton and his Committee. The allotted term of that body was reached on July 10, and, no attempt being made to extend the period, it was suffered to lapse; and, in the new Committee elected on the same day, the power which had been gradually slipping out of the hands of the moderate or Dantonist Jacobins was finally transferred to the extreme or Robespierrist section. True, Robespierre himself, with characteristic caution, was not a candidate for the new Committee; but, as soon as it was securely established, he began to attend its meetings, and on the resignation of Gasparin (July 24) hastened to get himself nominated. The members elected on July 10 were Jean Bon Saint-André, Barère, Gasparin, Couthon, Hérault, Thuriot, Prieur of the Marne, Saint-Just, and Robert Lindet. Of these Barère and Lindet had been original members of the first Committee, Hérault, Couthon, and Saint-Just had been members since May 30, Jean Bon Saint-André and Gasparin since June 12. Of the nine members only two, Hérault and Thuriot, were Dantonists; the whole of the remainder, including Barère who was Dantonist only so long as Danton's predominance was assured, owned the sway of Robespierre; above all Couthon and Saint-Just were his intimate allies. The salient feature, however, was not the substitution of Robespierrists for Dantonists, for the old Committee after June 12 had comprised a majority of the former, so much as the elimination of Danton himself. Though he continued to speak in the Convention, and — in the vain hope of inducing the new rulers to adopt his views — to advocate the further strengthening of the Committee, and though for a

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time there was a kind of alliance between him and Robespierre, July 10 marks the decline of Danton's influence and the rejection of his policy. In March he had set himself to create an all-powerful government, with the object of restoring equilibrium to politics at home and abroad; his masterful genius had succeeded in forging the weapon, but—strong as he was—he found it impossible to prevent it slipping from his hands; and in July it was snatched from him to be used for ends diametrically opposed to those for which he had designed it. Men moved by alternate spasms of ambition and cowardice now seized the reins of power, and democracy run mad was unchained and at large.

This Second, or Great, Committee of Public Safety experienced in its first few months of power a few changes of *personnel*, but after September 6 remained unchanged until July 27, 1794. As during this period the Committee was the absolute master of France, it is necessary to have a clear idea of its working and of the relations of its members one to another. On August 14 Carnot and Prieur of the Côte d'Or were added to replace provisionally Saint-André and Robert Lindet, who had gone on mission; but, proving indispensable, they were permanently retained. On September 6 Billaud-Varennes and Collot d'Herbois were introduced, so that after the retirement of Thuriot and Hérault the Committee numbered eleven.

It is plain that a vast work of reorganisation fell to this small knot of men. They found no staff of permanent officials, no existing administrative machinery; everything had to be organised from the very foundation. The men, who set themselves to accomplish this enormous task, were Carnot, Saint-André, the two Prieurs, and Robert Lindet. Carnot, a man of forty years, had been deputy for the Pas-de-Calais in both Legislative and Convention. Absolutely upright and single-minded, he determined to sacrifice everything to the reorganisation of the army. To effect this he succeeded in deadening every other feeling and was content to share the odium of the Terror, so long as he was allowed to be supreme in his own department. He would have been a superlative permanent official; but he lacked the comprehensive views necessary to a great statesman, and he had practically no influence on the general policy of the government of which he was a member. Saint-André was another honest official of the same type; throughout the Terror he was absorbed in a whole-hearted effort to restore efficiency to the ruined Navy. Prieur of the Côte d'Or was Carnot's right-hand man, and like him absorbed in the pressing needs of the armies; while his namesake of the Department of the Marne, being constantly on mission, hardly ever attended the meetings of the Committee. These men cannot be held guilty of the bloody policy adopted by their colleagues, save in so far as they passively acquiesced in it in order to maintain themselves in office. To Collot and Billaud, the one a dissolute cut-throat, the other a gloomy fanatic, both delighting in crime for crime's sake, leaning in fact to the

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school of Hébert, the savage excesses of the Terror may be attributed; to them these excesses were the gratification of natural ferocity, while to Robespierre and his immediate satellites, Couthon and Saint-Just, they were the logical reduction into practice of a political theory. Of Robespierre some note has already been made in these pages. Cowardice and ambition were for ever at variance within him. Ambition had thrust him into a position to fall from which involved certain retribution; cowardice therefore prompted him to avoid this retribution by striking with blind and bitter fury at all opponents. What might be mistaken for courage was thus in reality the violence of a desperate and terrified creature. Georges Couthon, Robespierre's devoted adherent in the Committee, was of Auvergne; of Robespierre's own age and profession, he seems to have genuinely cared for and believed in his leader; the partial paralysis which gave a certain pathos to his appearances in the *tribune* did not prevent his engaging actively in missions, to the management of which he brought a certain capacity of independent discrimination, rare in his colleagues. Closely allied with Robespierre and Couthon was Antoine Louis Léon de Saint-Just. No more than twenty-five years old when he entered the Convention, Saint-Just immediately identified himself with all the most violent and most visionary measures; endowed with an iron courage, rigid conviction, and that faculty of decision which Robespierre so conspicuously lacked, he now constantly came forward to supply the deficiencies of his leader. His fantastic dreams of a regenerated society were however too puerile even for Robespierre, who tolerated them only because he required the fearless energy of his young colleague to effect his own designs.

The new government did not delay to show its hand. The period of conciliation, which had been abnormal and a mere *tour-de-force* of Danton, was at an end; and the era of blind and indiscriminate violence commenced. The attitude of the government towards the revolted Provinces was at once altered. Normandy had indeed ceased to trouble. On July 13 a skirmish had taken place at Vernon between the "Army of Calvados," which had been ostentatiously moving on Paris in the Girondin interest, and some Parisian volunteers, aided by the local National Guard; and the insurgents ran away. The few Girondin deputies, who had managed to escape to Caen to foment the Norman insurrection, then took ship for Bordeaux, and Normandy ceased to be a centre of reaction. But in the Vendée, Lyons, and the south, resistance to the Jacobins continued. Lyons had by this time openly declared war. A Royalist veteran, the Comte de Précy, was in command of a formidable force of 40,000 National Guards with 300 guns; and every preparation was made for a stout resistance. On the very first day of its existence the new Committee showed that, for Lyons, the era of conciliation was over; on Couthon's motion, the leaders of the revolt were proscribed and the property of the Lyons "rebels" confiscated for the benefit of the local

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"patriots" — a direct enticement to men to take arms against the city for the lining of their own pockets. Utterly regardless of the safety of the frontiers, the Committee next instructed Kellermann to lead 6000 men against Lyons. The Lyonnais replied by executing Challier; but they offered to make terms if Couthon's decrees were withdrawn. Dubois-Crancé, the Conventional Commissioner, however, insisted on unconditional surrender; and on August 8 hostilities commenced. In the Vendée also July 10 was the signal for a new *régime*. A bloody code of fire and slaughter was imposed upon the revolted districts (August 1), with the result that on September 5 it was reported that "*des monceaux de cendres, la mort, la famine s'offrent de tous côtés aux regards des rebelles.*" Such effect, however, as these severities might have produced was largely neutralised by the policy, simultaneously adopted, of appointing incapable "popular" generals. Biron, Danton's nominee, was arrested, and the command in the Vendée was given to Rossignol, who was not only a tipsy and dissolute scoundrel, but a stupid and ignorant coward to boot; so much so that he was suspended on August 22 by the Convention's own Commissioners, only however to be reinstated six days later. It was at this time also (July 12) that, in the Army of the North, Houchard replaced Custine, who was arrested on July 22, condemned by the Revolutionary Tribunal, and executed (August 28).

The enforcement of these violent measures had been greatly facilitated by the course events were taking at home as well as at the front. On July 13 Paris was startled by the intelligence of the assassination of Marat. The "*Ami du Peuple*," confined to his house by sickness, was in his bath, when a woman named Charlotte Corday, of Caen, penetrated to his apartment and plunged a dagger into his heart. She seems to have been actuated not only by private motives of revenge but also by a genuine desire to avenge the Girondins. It appears indeed that Charlotte Corday — and she half-mad — was the only person in France who sincerely regretted the once idolised Gironde. The death of Marat in this dramatic fashion was of enormous value to the new government. He had, it is true, long lost his importance, and his bloodthirsty ravings and avowed policy of murder had been more calculated to embarrass than to aid his colleagues. Alive, therefore, he would have been a positive obstacle; dead, however, and dead in a manner so sensational, he was a perfect godsend. The very men, who would have found him so awkward a colleague, fell into paroxysms of eulogy: Marat was promptly deified and his remains buried with extravagant pomp on July 19; Charlotte was of course tried and executed; advantage was taken of the spontaneous act of an enthusiast to persuade people of the existence of vast Girondin intrigues, and of the consequent necessity for harsh and violent measures.

Events at the front had also played into the hands of the Committee, for the month of July had been a month of disaster for France. On

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July 12 the allies took Condé; on the 23rd Mainz was compelled to surrender; and on the 28th Valenciennes capitulated to Coburg. Once more Paris seemed open to the advance of the Allies; it was a repetition of August, 1792. But the danger was in reality not so great as it appeared. The Allies, hopelessly divided, were united only in their determination not to invade. Of this determination the Committee was perfectly well aware, and, secure in the knowledge that Paris was safe, it welcomed the reverses of July as an admirable lever for use in domestic politics. The apparent danger of France gave it the excuse for removing obnoxious generals, for increasing the power of the Revolutionary Tribunal, for violent measures against foreigners, for atrocities on a colossal scale in the Vendée, for the commencement of proceedings against the Queen, and, what it now desired most of all, for the completion of the downfall of the Girondins.

The proscribed deputies were still wandering about France fomenting ineffectual disturbances. Neither at Bordeaux nor in any other part of the country was there any serious outbreak in their favour, and the Committee could have afforded to treat them with indifference. It was not however inclined to do so, thinking no doubt that a ruthless vengeance would be a warning to future rivals. The "Moderate" report of July 8 was subjected therefore to the revision of Barère, who proposed (July 28) the outlawry of twenty-one of the Girondins for rebellion, and the trial of nine others for complicity therein. This second report, although adopted, had little immediate effect; and for two months more the threatened deputies remained at large.

The new government was in fact not yet sufficiently sure of its position to be able to proceed to extremities. The completion of the Constitution should, by rights, have heralded the spontaneous dissolution of the Convention — Committee of Public Safety and all — but Convention and Committee were united in their determination to cling to power, knowing what to expect if they let go. Danton, who was still bidding for the favour of the new rulers, identified himself with this policy of prolonging the power of the Committee; and it was he who, with a boldness from which the Committee itself shrank, proposed (August 1) "that the Committee of Public Safety be erected into a Provisional Government." But the outcry provoked by this suggestion terrified the Committee into a disavowal of their too outspoken advocate. Robespierre, however, desired to retain for the time being the alliance of Danton against the threatened combination of Commune, War Office, and gutter-politicians, which was just as objectionable to the new as to the old Committee. It was the old story. Robespierre had used the Hébertists to drive Danton from office; by doing so he had given them a dangerous access of strength, and he was now obliged to employ the waning but still potent influence of the great demagogue to lay the evil genius which he had himself let loose.

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To the Hébertists, power and office, affording as they did the most convenient opportunities for plunder and patronage, were the only goal of politics; and they were not content to leave the prizes of victory to Robespierre any more than to Danton. All through the month of August they were busy pushing forward measures calculated to increase their own power. On August 10 the *fête* of the Constitution had been celebrated; and on the very next day Lacroix had the courage to propose that the Convention should fulfil its Constitutional obligations by dissolving itself — a proposal which was greeted with a storm of execrations. On the same day the Hébertists, through the representatives of the provincial Communes, who were in Paris for the *fête*, demanded a *levée-en-masse* of the people of France. This was no doubt a splendid inspiration. As a military expedient it was of course ludicrous and calculated to produce paralysis in every department of the War Office; for there were neither rations, arms, clothes, nor officers for such a levy. This however mattered not at all to the advocates of the scheme. To them it commended itself, not for any military reason, but because it both had an air of patriotism and was an admirable means for getting all Moderates out of the way. The impracticability of the proposal aroused the opposition of Danton; he took up the cry for the levy, but pointed out the folly of making it universal; "*il faut mourir*," he said, "*pour la patrie, mais il faut mourir utilement.*" Thus the proposal was converted by the genius of Danton, backed by Carnot and Prieur of the Côte d'Or, from the collection of a clumsy and powerless rabble to the orderly enlistment of an effective body of recruits. Only those between the ages of 18 and 25 were called out. This whittling down of their scheme was a severe blow to the Hébertists; but the military results of an addition of 450,000 men to the armies were in the end considerable.

Danton's interference in this matter of the *levée* served to widen the breach between him and the Hébertists; and the defeat of Hébert himself by Paré, an intimate of Danton, in the election of a Minister of the Interior to replace Garat (August 20), made matters worse. Feeling was thus running very high, when, in the early days of September, arrived the startling news that Toulon, with the chief fleet of France, had surrendered on August 23 to the English admiral, Hood. The disaffection of the two great southern seaports of Marseilles and Toulon had for some weeks past caused grave anxiety to the government. Marseilles, after June 2, had expelled the Conventional Commissioners, and despatched an army against Paris which had penetrated as far as Orange, only however to be driven from Avignon on July 27 by Carteaux, who had been detached with 1500 men from the Army of the Alps. Carteaux twice defeated the Marseillais, and finally entered Marseilles on August 25. The antagonism of Toulon had been roused by provocations similar to those which had stirred Lyons to resistance. The Jacobin intrigue and

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violence, which had long troubled the city, culminated on July 14 in a scheme to murder respectable citizens. Such a threat provoked them to retaliate; a new municipality was formed, and five murderers were executed. This insurrection was therefore, like that of Lyons, mainly a struggle for personal security. The Conventional Commissioners were now arrested, and Louis XVII proclaimed; but Barras and Fréron, the Commissioners to the Army of Italy, worked with energy and prudence to check the spread of the revolt; and, after the defeat of the Marseillais had removed all hope of aid from that quarter, the men of Toulon determined to invite the allied fleets, which were blockading the harbour, to occupy the town.

The fall of Toulon was a climax to the disasters of the Republic, and was the signal for a great outburst of revolutionary activity. The early days of September saw the introduction of a series of decrees which may be held to have finally established the Terror. On September 3 the compulsory loan of 1000 millions was enforced, the *maximum* for corn further reduced, and arbitrary steps taken for the provisioning of Paris. On September 5 the action of the Revolutionary Tribunal was expedited by its division into four sections. Further, on the demand of Chaumette, the dominating spirit of the Commune, a Revolutionary Army of 6000 men was established, to patrol Paris, make war on reactionaries, guard provisions, and carry out revolutionary laws, a measure which gave legal status and organisation to those bands of armed and dangerous ruffians which had long, but hitherto illegally, been the scourge of respectable Paris. Private houses were next thrown open to search; the Sectional Assemblies were renovated, and received power to arrest; and, to ensure their efficiency, the "Law of Forty *Sous*" was passed, on the motion of Danton (September 5), arranging for two Section meetings a week and a salary of 40 *sous* for each attendance.

These measures, provoked and excused by the apparently desperate situation of the Republic, were welcomed by the Hébertists as a triumph for their opinions. Their ascendancy was further emphasised by the introduction into the Committee of Public Safety, on September 6, of Billaud and Collot, both of whom were thoroughly imbued with Hébertist doctrines. Billaud had marked his return (on August 29) from a mission to the Army of the North by the delivery of a venomous attack on the Committee for the evil plight in which he had found that army. It was tantamount to a vote of censure; and it was to stop the mouth of so dangerous a critic that the Committee elected him a member and with him introduced his kindred spirit, Collot. With these two men entered the element of Hébertism, of sheer, brutal, impolitic violence; and on the day of their election the Committee may be said to have finally started on the inclined plane of crime.

On September 9 the Hébertists further captured the subordinate but important *Comité de Sûreté Générale*, which had the control of police

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affairs, and which had hitherto been under the influence of Danton. The Commune also secured a grant of a million weekly for the provisioning of Paris, five-sixths of which actually found its way into the pockets of the municipal functionaries: one may be certain that this was not the least acceptable of the advantages which September brought to the Hébertists. The new *régime* was completed (September 17) by the introduction of the "Law of the Suspect." This infamous law, "the procuress of the guillotine," was the work of the distinguished jurist, Merlin of Douai; it defined suspects as "all who had befriended tyranny, not paid taxes, or who were not furnished with '*Cartes de Civisme*' from their Sections." All such were to be arrested and could be tried by any tribunal; and the Revolutionary Committees of the Sections were to draw up lists of suspects for the *Comité de Sûreté Générale*. This law renewed and completed the tyranny of the Sections. On the same day the *maximum*, which had already, limited as its action was, plunged the Provinces into the most terrible destitution, was extended to other commodities besides corn; and the "crime" of withdrawing such commodities from sale was made punishable by death and confiscation. All freedom of agriculture and trade was thus destroyed, and the State assumed the entire control of both.

The extremists of the Convention and the Committee now considered themselves strong enough to proceed with the long-postponed impeachment of the Girondins. The last remnants of the power of the Dantonists were disappearing; Thuriot, disgusted at the introduction of Billaud and Collot, had retired from the Committee (September 20). Danton himself was meditating withdrawal to his home at Arcis. Robespierre and his friends, who had been waiting their opportunity with relentless patience, were not slow to avail themselves of it. On October 3 the doors of the Convention were suddenly locked; and Amar, a friend of Robespierre and a member of the *Comité de Sûreté Générale*, introduced the Report of that Committee on the proscribed Girondins. In this fierce measure no less than 129 deputies were implicated; and so cowed was the Convention that not a protest was raised. Forty-three deputies were handed over to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and sixty-five placed under arrest, while the decree of outlawry of July 28 was maintained against twenty-one. Amongst the forty-three was the name of Philippe Égalité, included no doubt in order to cast upon the Girondins the odium of *Orléanisme*, a crime of which the Jacobins alone had been guilty. A proposal to include in the proscription the seventy-five signatories of a protest against the *coup d'état* of June 2, all members of the Right or Centre, was postponed on the suggestion of Robespierre; and to this diplomatic act of clemency he owed that subservience of the Plain, on which he eventually came to depend. Only twenty-one of the forty-three were immediately forthcoming, and they were placed in confinement pending the commencement of proceedings.

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The violence of the attack on the Girondins, as well as all the revolutionary legislation of September, was Hébertist in origin, and largely due to the presence on the Committee of Billaud and Collot. But it was not the intention of the Robespierrists to allow the Commune or the Hébertist Ministry to oust the Committee of Public Safety. On the contrary they had consented to include the Hébertist element in the existing government, only as a bribe to induce that powerful party to refrain from any attempt to establish another form of government. And now the Committee felt that the time had come when they must declare their own permanence and that of the Convention; for this declaration the ground had been carefully prepared by petitions procured from the Departments, imploring the Convention not to desert France in the hour of danger. On October 10 therefore Saint-Just proposed that "the government be revolutionary until the peace"; and thus the final step was taken by which the Constitution was overriden and the permanent usurpation of the Committee definitely avowed.

Simultaneously with this declaration came the momentous news of the fall of Lyons. On August 8 the siege had been commenced by Kellermann; but, as there were not sufficient forces to invest the city, Dubois-Crancé ordered its bombardment. About the middle of September famine became serious, and by the end of the month the besiegers, whose numbers now reached 50,000, were able to storm the outworks. Précy, seeing that all was lost, cut his way out and escaped with about 2000 followers, leaving the city in the hands of the Republicans. Couthon was at once sent to demolish the town; but, although a savage Terrorist, he was not a Hébertist, and saw the folly of such a proceeding. He therefore delayed the execution of the sentence and established a comparatively mild Terror, with the result that, on October 29, he was recalled, and Collot himself, accompanied by Fouché and other picked men, with 3000 of the Parisian Revolutionary Army, proceeded to Lyons and introduced a system of wholesale massacres. The ordinary methods being too dilatory, prisoners were shot down in large batches, and in seven of these "*mitraillades*" no less than 484 persons were killed. The total number of victims under the bloody rule of Collot and Fouché has been variously estimated, and may have been anything from 1600 to 6000. On October 26 the demolition of houses, begun under Couthon, proceeded at a cost of 400,000 francs a day until a considerable portion of the city was destroyed.

Thus auspiciously opened the absolute reign of the Committee. But it was not at Lyons alone that fortune smiled upon the Republican arms; and the late autumn of 1793 was as much a period of Republican successes as the early autumn had been of reverses. Everywhere the tireless energy, organising capacity, and military judgment of Carnot and the "workers" of the Committee began to have effect. On October 16 Jourdan won the battle of Wattignies; Pichegru and Hoche commenced

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offensive operations in November; and on December 26 the latter forced the lines of Weissenburg and drove the Prussians from Alsace.

Meanwhile Carteaux after the capture of Marseilles had laid siege to Toulon. The siege of Toulon derives much of its interest from the fact that it introduces a new and fateful character into the drama of the Revolution, for here Napoleon Bonaparte may be said to have won his spurs. Of Florentine extraction on both sides, Bonaparte had been born in Corsica on August 15, 1769. His father had been identified with the cause of the patriot Paoli until the island was handed over to France. Accepting these new rulers he succeeded in getting his son Napoleon admitted to the military academy at Brienne (April, 1779), in which school and in the military academy of Paris he was trained, until in 1785 he received a commission in the French regiment of *La Fère*. During this period and until 1790 Napoleon was absorbed in dreams of the independence of Corsica; but a personal rebuff from his idol, Paoli, caused him to identify himself with France and the Revolution. He seems to have had powerful friends, and after the events of June 20 and August 10, of both of which crises he was an eye-witness, he received a Captain's Commission and became the devoted servant of the Revolution. Bonaparte now returned to Corsica and attempted to play the double part of Patriot and Revolutionary, identifying the salvation of Corsica with the suzerainty of France. Paoli however appealed to England and the Bonapartes were obliged to take refuge in France.

Napoleon's services were employed in the campaign of Carteaux against Marseilles, but he had no share in the fate of that town, being left behind to reorganise the artillery at Avignon. Here he was found by the Convention Commissioners, Salicetti and the younger Robespierre, on their way to join the army; and to them he showed a pamphlet with the composition of which he had — not we may imagine without ulterior motives — been beguiling the distasteful moments of inaction. This pamphlet, *Le Souper de Beaucaire*, was an admirable presentation of the most telling arguments in favour of the Jacobin government, and well calculated to win the approbation of the Commissioners, who now became eager to push forward so promising a young Republican. Carteaux had advanced against Toulon with some 4000 men, and was joined by a division of the Army of Italy, with whom were Fréron and Barras. After the fall of Lyons more troops became available; the command was given to Dugommier; and the siege began in earnest. By the influence of the friendly commissioners Bonaparte now secured the command of a battery. The strategy by which the town was taken, the essential part of which was the seizure of Cépet, a promontory that commanded both the inner and the outer harbours, has often been attributed to him; it seems however improbable that he was the author of it, although, by his vigour and the skill with which he directed the artillery, he contributed much to its success. The English and

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Spaniards soon found the harbour untenable, and, carrying off a number of the inhabitants, and either towing away or destroying about one half of the French ships, they abandoned Toulon to the Republicans, who entered the city on December 19. The surrendered town was at once handed over to the Convention Commissioners; they used their powers with extreme ferocity, fusilladed in three days some 800 citizens, and established a Revolutionary Tribunal which destroyed about 1800 persons within three months.

At length the war in the west, after many unexpected vicissitudes, seemed to be nearing its close. The peril, to which Nantes, and with Nantes the Republic, had been subjected in June, had determined the government that the insurrection was not to be trifled with. Westermann was instructed to create a diversion in the Bocage, where he began to lay waste the country; but his violence only provoked reprisals, and his temerity led to his defeat at Châtillon (July 5), when he barely escaped by precipitate flight. Throughout July concerted efforts were made by the Republicans to establish a footing in the Bocage; but, although they took Chantonnay (July 23), they were unable to hold it, and at the end of the month the insurgents were still masters of their own country, devastated though it was.

Enormous reinforcements, including the liberated garrison of Mainz, were now hurried westwards. But the appointment of the ruffian Rossignol to the chief command (July 27) did not aid matters. On August 1 the government carried a fierce decree that the revolted districts should be devastated and depopulated, in face of which the insurgent leaders swore to continue their resistance to the death. D'Elbée replaced Cathelineau as commander-in-chief: he was probably the least capable of the possible leaders, and his first action was disastrous. A concentration of the insurgent forces of both Bocage and Marais was effected against the important town of Luçon, the capture of which would have established permanent communications between the two districts. Owing however to blundering leadership, and to the unfavourable nature of the open ground, where artillery, in which arm they were very deficient, told so heavily, the insurgents sustained the most bloody defeat of the war, and fled eastwards, leaving, it was said, 6000 dead upon the field. Chantonnay fell once more into the hands of the Republicans, only however to be retaken on September 5, after a struggle in which Luçon was fully avenged. The insurgents were also victorious in no less than five other pitched battles between September 18 and 22, the most important of which was that of Torfou-Tiffauges, where the impetuous valour of the *Vendéens* bore down, after seven hours' fighting, even the resistance of the stubborn defenders of Mainz; and a complete rout was only averted by the coolness of Kléber.

Now however the weakness inherent in undisciplined levies began to show itself in personal quarrels between the leaders. Charette took

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offence over some petty question of booty and suddenly withdrew into the Marais. His desertion sadly weakened the *grande armée*; and, several reverses having been sustained, Bonchamps, the most experienced of its generals, counselled a second crossing of the Loire and the execution of the old plan of raising a rebellion in Normandy and Britanny. Before adopting this expedient, however, it was determined to make one final effort to clear the Bocage. Cholet, its strongest eastern outwork, was being threatened by the Republicans, and it was decided to give battle there. Four thousand men were first detached to secure the passage of the Loire — a precaution which, although no doubt strategically correct, was disastrous in its moral effect, as it laid bare to the peasants the despairing attitude of their leaders, and rendered them, when the crisis came, only too willing to adopt the means of safety provided. During the whole of October 16, Cholet, a country town perched on a gentle wooded eminence overlooking the eastward Plaine, was the scene of a desperate struggle. Towards evening a scare of Republican reinforcements arose and with it the fatal cry "*à la Loire.*" In a last magnificent charge Bonchamps and d'Elbée were both mortally wounded; and once more, as at Nantes, the fall of their leaders completed the discomfiture of the peasants, who turned in headlong flight towards the river. Four thousand *Vendéens* were dead on the field; their two most trusted leaders lay dying; the remnant of the army was in hopeless rout. It is no wonder that the Republicans regarded the insurrection as at an end.

L'Échelle, however, the incompetent successor of the incompetent Rossignol, was quite unprepared for the crossing of the Loire, and unable either to prevent it or to pursue. The majority of the peasants dispersed to their homes, but some 50,000 of the boldest, accompanied by a host of women and children, established themselves unmolested on the right bank of the Loire. But Bonchamps, the deviser of the plan, and the one man who might have brought it to a successful issue, was dying, and it became necessary to appoint a new commander. Henri de La Rochejaquelein, on whom the choice fell, glorious and inspiring hero though he was, a tactician of real genius, and in battle the bravest of the brave, lacked the necessary experience — he was but twenty-one — and had neither the temper nor the wisdom in council required to extricate the army from its perilous position. No sooner was the crossing effected than divided counsels prevailed; the wounded Lescure advised a fresh advance on Nantes, others an advance into Britanny or Normandy. While they deliberated, the chance of advancing on Nantes slipped away; and it was less by choice than of necessity that the army pushed northwards and on October 23 occupied Laval.

Meanwhile the Republicans, at last grasping the situation, had flung themselves across the Loire; and on October 25 their vanguard, under Westermann, engaging the insurgents somewhat prematurely, was roughly

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handled and compelled to fall back. Two days later the main body came up, and battle was joined at Château Gontier. The Republicans were now to find that, even as fugitives, their opponents were formidable. De La Rochejaquelein signalised his first appearance in supreme command by a display not only of his customary valour, but also of real tactical skill. The incompetence of L'Échelle was as conspicuous as the capacity of his opponent. The Republican army was driven in hopeless confusion over the Mayenne, and L'Échelle fled to hide his shame at Nantes. It was now clear that the battle of Cholet had by no means ended the *Vendéen* resistance. In order to pursue the fugitive insurgents the Republicans had evacuated the Vendée itself; and Charette, who had, since his desertion of the *grande armée*, been more than holding his own in the Marais, now returned to Lêgé, and became a rallying-point for further resistance.

Once more, however, the Republicans were aided by the divided counsels of their antagonists. La Rochejaquelein had the wisdom to advocate a return to the Vendée, but neither the patience nor the self-confidence to press his views, with the consequence that the army struck blindly northwards, and occupied Mayenne (November 2), Fougères (November 4), and Dol (November 9). Then, in the vague hope of half-promised assistance from England, they attacked the small fortified seaport town of Granville, only to find themselves powerless against even the weakest fortifications for want of suitable artillery.

After this failure the insurgent generals advocated a withdrawal into Normandy; but the peasants, now when it was too late, were seized with an overpowering desire to return home, and, much against his will, La Rochejaquelein turned southwards again. With the courage born of despair, he snatched on November 18 and 20 two victories from the Republicans, and entered Dol. These successes of the dwindling and disheartened, but still dangerous army, may be largely attributed to the incapacity of Rossignol; and it was only the sagacity of his subordinates, Kléber and Marceau, that prevented their being turned into disasters to the Republican army. So disorganised were the Republicans that they could not prevent the insurgents from reaching Angers, which was saved only by the strength of its fortifications. An attempt was now made by the insurgents of the Bocage to secure a passage for their fugitive compatriots, but it was too late. Doubling eastwards in the hope of effecting a crossing at Saumur or Tours, the *grande armée*, reduced now to some 25,000 broken men, was overtaken at Le Mans by Kléber, Marceau, and Westermann. A bloody victory was followed by a wanton butchery of prisoners; 15,000 persons are said to have perished in this terrible affair (December 13).

It was now only a question of how many fugitives could slip across the river; the fate of those who remained on the right bank was sealed. Struggling back to Ancenis, La Rochejaquelein and Stofflet, in a fruitless

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attempt to get the army across by means of a single boat, were cut off from their troops. Flying westwards, amidst every circumstance of horror, the leaderless remnant was at length overtaken by Kléber at Savenay (December 23), where, though not without an heroic and desperate resistance, the last of the grand Royal and Catholic army, which had so long troubled the Republic, and for a while even threatened its very existence, was utterly cut to pieces. After this final defeat the war might have been brought to an end had the government but consented to act with reasonable clemency; its continuance, after the annihilation of the main body of the insurgents, is to be attributed to the insane violence of the Committee and its emissaries. Nantes and Angers were already furnished with Revolutionary Tribunals; the perpetration of most wholesale atrocities had commenced; and Carrier, finding that the Revolutionary Tribunal of Nantes could not dispose of more than 200 victims in a day, conceived the idea of drowning his prisoners in large batches. Great barges, filled with unfortunates of all ages and both sexes, were scuttled in the Loire. In this ghastly fashion not less than 1500 persons perished, possibly many more. A total of at least 15,000 suffered in different fashions during Carrier's four months' rule at Nantes. Little wonder that, even after Savenay, the insurgents preferred to remain under arms rather than be done to death in cold blood.

While the active members of the Committee were engaged in subjugating the revolted districts and in driving the allies across the frontiers, its Terrorist members were busily occupied in establishing their system both in the Provinces and in Paris itself. In Paris their first step was to institute proceedings against Marie-Antoinette. The unfortunate Queen, who had been separated from her family on July 1, and transferred to the Conciergerie on September 1, was there subjected to preliminary interrogations by the *Comité de Sûreté Générale*, while the royal children were examined with shocking indecency by Pache, Chaumette, Hébert, David, and Simon. On October 14 the Queen appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal, and replied, with great dignity and remarkable skill, to the fierce examination of Hermann, the President. On October 15 Fouquier-Tinville, the Public Prosecutor, delivered his accusation, in which he charged the Queen with (i.) handing large sums of money to the Emperor before the Revolution; (ii.) encouraging a Counter-Revolution; (iii.) producing famine; (iv.) plotting flight and instigating "massacres," in particular that of the Champ de Mars; (v.) forming the "Austrian Committee"; (vi.) the vetoes; (vii.) planning August 10; (viii.) betraying French plans to the allies; (ix.) incestuous intercourse with her son (aged eight). Witnesses were called, and the Queen was subjected to a fierce and prolonged examination. As she had had no notice of the nature of the charges, she was of course unable to cross-examine or to call witnesses on her side. Her

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counsel's defence was perfunctory, and, after Hermann had summed up and the jury had deliberated for an hour, a verdict of "Guilty on all counts" was brought in. At 7 a.m. on October 16 Marie-Antoinette was conveyed in a cart to the Place de la Révolution. She ignored the attentions of the Constitutional *curé*, bore with indifference the insults of the mob, and met her death with the same dignified courage which had characterised her behaviour throughout the proceedings.

The Queen's trial over, the attention of the Tribunal was at once transferred to the proscribed Girondins, who since October 3 had been awaiting trial in the Conciergerie. Of the twenty-one, who on October 24 appeared at the bar, the most prominent were Brissot, Vergniaud, and Gensonné. They presented a defence thoroughly Girondin in spirit; each man, in spite of the knowledge that he was prejudged, was base enough to try and prove himself a *Montagnard*. After six sittings Fouquier complained of the slowness of the proceedings; and on October 29 it was enacted that after two days the jury might declare themselves satisfied of the guilt or innocence of the prisoners. Thus on October 29, at 7 p.m., a verdict of guilty was brought in and sentence pronounced. Valazé stabbed himself in Court, and on October 31 (10 Brumaire) the remainder went to the scaffold. Thus perished the main body of the Girondins; but for many months the pursuit of the fugitives continued. Madame Roland met her fate on November 10 with a real, if characteristically ostentatious, courage; Lebrun was executed on December 27; Salles and Guadet on June 19, 1794; Barbaroux shot himself, but lived to be executed on June 15; and a number of less-known members mounted the scaffold on various dates in 1793 and 1794. A long list of suicides brings the Girondins' story to a close. Roland stabbed himself on hearing of his wife's death (November 15), and Clavière on December 8; Condorcet took poison (March 28); Rebecqui drowned himself (May 3); Pétion and Buzot shot themselves (June 18).

Their rivals thus disposed of, the *Montagnards* turned to isolated victims; Philippe Égalité, a prisoner since April 7, had been guillotined on November 6, bitterly repenting of his evil deeds; he was followed to the scaffold, on November 12, by Bailly, whose conduct in the affair of the Champ de Mars was now avenged by the cruelty and needless prolongation of his execution.

Of the other victims of this bloody winter the most conspicuous were Barnave and Duport-du-Tertre (November 28), Manuel (November 14), who perished for his humane refusal to give evidence against the Queen, and Rabaut (December 5); while of the generals the younger Custine (January 3), Houchard (November 17), Biron (December 31), and the aged Luckner quickly followed one another to the guillotine; while on May 10, the Princess Elizabeth, sister of Louis XVI, serenely ended her pure and beautiful life on the scaffold.

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Thus the winter of 1793, or An III, as we must now call it, for the Republican Calendar had come into force on November 24, 1793,[1] saw the Hébertist *régime* in full power in every direction, and the ascendancy of War Office and Commune increasing daily. In the Committee, although Billaud was inclined to fall away from the Hébertists, the influence of Collot, the most violent of the Terrorists, was very great; in the armies the Hébertists were supreme, while in every Department some member of the party was battening on ill-gotten gains. It was plain that the government of the country could not long be maintained on these anarchical lines. The incompetence of the Hébertist generals became daily more apparent; and the unbridled pillage and peculation which characterised the *régime* were ruinous to armies and treasury alike. All therefore who desired to maintain the power of the Committee saw the necessity of purging it of its Hébertism. Robespierre, caring nothing for efficiency of government and even less for the abatement of the Terror, was nevertheless stung to action by the not unfounded fear lest the Hébertists should attempt to snatch the power from the Committee and deposit it with the Commune and Ministries. When Collot left Paris for Lyons early in November, Billaud being now inclined to throw in his lot with the Committee rather than with the Commune, the anti-Hébertists found themselves in a majority in the Committee, while in the Convention

[1] The Republican Era dated from September 22, 1792, the date of the foundation of the Republic, which happened to coincide with the Autumnal Equinox. Each month had 30 days, and was divided into three *décades*. At the end of the year were added five *Sansculottides* or *jours complémentaires*: but in the year III and in every fourth year afterwards a sixth *Sansculottide* was added, called *jour de la Révolution*. The Leap Years *Ans* IV, VIII, etc. were called *Sextiles*. Each period of four years was called a *Franciade*. Romme's decree (4 Frimaire, An II), arranged for a *jour de la Révolution* at the end of Leap Years, but this arrangement does not seem to have been adhered to, and the extra day was added at the end of the years preceding Leap Years. Thus the Gregorian and Republican Calendars were at variance in these years from September 23 to February 29.

A further divergence is caused by the fact that the year 1800 was not, in the Gregorian Calendar, a Leap Year. With the corrections necessary in consequence, the following key will explain the Calendar:—

To the number of the day in

Vendémiaire	add 21	to get the number of the day in			September.
Brumaire	,, 21	,,	,,	,,	October.
Frimaire	,, 20	,,	,,	,,	November.
Nivôse	,, 20	,,	,,	,,	December.
Pluviôse	,, 19	,,	,,	,,	January.
Ventôse	,, 18	,,	,,	,,	February.
Germinal	,, 20	,,	,,	,,	March.
Floréal	,, 19	,,	,,	,,	April.
Prairial	,, 19	,,	,,	,,	May.
Messidor	,, 18	,,	,,	,,	June.
Thermidor	,, 18	,,	,,	,,	July.
Fructidor	,, 17	,,	,,	,,	August.

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Robespierre could command the votes of the Plain, so many of whom laboured under the suspicion of Girondism. But the strength of the Commune was considerable, and the Hébertists were men who would stick at nothing. Robespierre therefore was disinclined to move without further support, and for this support he now looked to Danton.

Danton had since October 12 been in retirement at Arcis. He had been much disgusted by the brutality and incapacity of the Hébertists. Their behaviour had strengthened his conviction of the necessity for a moderate and reasonable but at the same time omnipotent government. It was with the determination to establish such a government that he now (November 21) returned to Paris. He still favoured the further strengthening of the Committee, no doubt intending to enter it himself and to guide its policy in the desired direction. Danton however misjudged the attitude of Robespierre; that astute self-seeker was moved by no craving for mercy or moderation, qualities which he regarded as dangerous to himself; he merely wished to employ Danton's vigour and conviction to overthrow his rivals. The policy of mercy was to serve this purpose, after which no more would be heard of it.

The first indication of the *rapprochement* of Danton and Robespierre came in a report of the latter (November 17) on the state of the nation, in which the remarks on foreign relations had a strong Dantonist flavour. On November 21 the spread of atheism was denounced in the Jacobins. Atheism was one of the leading features in the Hébertist programme, and had been given great prominence in the legislation of the last two months. On September 18 the stipends of *curés* had been reduced; on November 6 Communes had been empowered to remove their *curés*; while the clergy were enticed into resignation by the offer of pensions to those who abdicated and the reduction of the stipends (*traitements*) of those who refused. Meanwhile, under the auspices of Chaumette, Gobel, Archbishop of Paris, and a number of other "ecclesiastics" abjured Christianity (November 7); and on November 10 the Cathedral of *Notre Dame* was consecrated, amidst much childish profanity, to the worship of Reason. On November 24 the Commune closed all the churches of Paris; and within twenty days 2436 French churches were converted into "Temples of Reason" without protest from the Convention.

Robespierre had cleverly determined to work on the wounded religious feelings of the community to secure the overthrow of his rivals. In his crusade against atheism he was joined by Danton; genuine hatred of fanaticism moved the latter, profound cunning the former. The battle was fought out at the Jacobin Club, where an *épuration* was in progress. Danton's name came up on December 3, and he would have been *épuré* but for the support of Robespierre. The very next day Danton passed the great law by which the Committee was to receive its final access of strength. Originally mooted by Billaud on November 21, the law of 14 Frimaire placed all constituted authorities under the

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control of the Committee of Public Safety, replaced the local authorities by "*agents nationaux*" emanating directly from the Committee, forbade the levying of taxes by local authorities, prohibited public meetings, and directed all "*Représentants en mission*" to correspond regularly with the Committee. This drastic law marks the final step in the establishment of the supremacy of the Committee of Public Safety. Danton seems to have believed with a confidence amounting to infatuation in the ultimate success of that Committee and in his own power of dominating it. His attitude at this moment was that of a gambler staking his remaining possessions on the hazard responsible for his former losses.

But the law of 14 Frimaire did more than strengthen the Committee; it struck a direct and heavy blow at the Commune by forbidding the formation of any central Committee of the Sections, and by directing the Sections to correspond no longer with the Commune but with the *Comité de Sûreté Générale*.

Meanwhile the attacks on the Hébertists were increasing in violence. On November 17 a number of subordinate members of that party, including Vincent and Ronsin, had been arrested; but this step was premature, and they were subsequently released. Then an elaborate exposure of the peculations and incapacity of Ronsin and Rossignol was commenced by Danton's friend Philippeaux, who had witnessed their misdeeds in the Vendée; and on December 5 Camille Desmoulins, inspired by Danton and patronised by Robespierre himself, began the issue of the *Vieux Cordelier*, in the third number of which (published December 15) he denounced the atrocities of the Hébertists, and suggested the possibility of a policy of mercy. The *Vieux Cordelier* sent a great wave of hope throughout the wretched country; and petitions against the Hébertists poured into the Convention. Indeed the only excuse which even a Collot could plead for the Terror had passed away with the French victories of the last months of 1793. The political leaders were however so deeply implicated in the Terror that any talk of clemency or reaction made them tremble. Danton with his courageous inconsistency doubly risked his life in advocating a policy of mercy, knowing that, if successful, it would bring retribution to him for his share in the Terror, but if unsuccessful it would involve its advocate in its own ruin. For the moment indeed it seemed that Danton's hour had come. The effect of Camille's stinging epigrams and broad appeal for mercy was immense. But when Robespierre saw that his ally was serious in his cry for clemency, he drew back and apologised for his weakness to the Jacobin Club.

While matters thus hung in the balance, the reappearance on December 20 of Collot, fresh from the massacres of Lyons, turned the scale in favour of the Terrorists. With coarse effrontery, and inflated by the prestige of his bloody deeds, he justified his conduct and denounced the cowardice of those who spoke of clemency. His triumph

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was complete; the Committee rallied to him, and Robespierre himself recanted, declaring himself (December 25) with incredible meanness, in a report on the principles of revolutionary government, to be once more in favour of the Terror in all its excesses. This desertion by their powerful ally left the Dantonists in a most perilous position. Philippeaux, Bourdon of the Oise, and Desmoulins were vigorously denounced in the Jacobin Club; Robespierre, although he made some attempt to save Desmoulins, with brazen composure denied his connexion with the *Vieux Cordelier*. The Dantonists on the other hand courted destruction by the vigour and temerity of their protests; they lashed out in every direction, against the Hébertists, against the War Office, against the Committee itself for its *volte-face*. On January 12 Fabre d'Eglantine, a violent Dantonist and a man who, knowing much of the inner history of the Terror and its agents, was really dangerous to men like Collot, was arrested on a number of charges, vague enough but quite possibly true; and on February 2 the arrested Hébertists were liberated. Throughout these proceedings Robespierre, posing as a patriotic revolutionary, sacrificed his late allies with the utmost composure, and, while reproaching both Dantonists and Hébertists, the one with their moderation, the other with their violence, inclined more and more to favour the latter at the expense of the former. Always a prey to indecision and dislike of action, Robespierre was in fact unable to decide at which of his rivals to strike, or whether to strike at all; and it was only on February 20 that he was able to persuade himself to take definite action. The decision to strike came in fact not from Robespierre but from Saint-Just, who had just returned from the second of two missions to the army. Saint-Just was a man of iron resolution and came fresh to the political intrigues of Paris; to him Dantonists and Hébertists alike were an obstacle and he at once determined to strike at both in quick succession. That he had no squeamish feelings of moderation he promptly proved by carrying (February 26) the proposal, originally mooted in January by Couthon, that the property of suspects should be confiscated for the benefit of poor "patriots."

This was not only tantamount to a declaration that the Terror was to continue, but a direct bid for the support of the *Sansculottes*, who had hitherto been wholly the *protégés* of the Commune. It was therefore a back-handed blow at the Hébertists, a triumph for their principles but at their expense.

It was thus time for the Hébertists to begin to show their teeth. During the first ten days of March the crisis was a very grave one for the Committee, and there was little to indicate how it would end. The Hébertists were in a very strong position; the Commune and with it the National Guard, the Mayor, the Minister of War, and the large bodies of miscreants and gaol-birds who infested Paris, were all favourable to them. Hanriot also, the victor of June 2, was inclined to Hébertism;

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and the Cordeliers' Club was plotting immediate insurrection. But the return of Saint-Just on the other hand had consolidated the Committee. Collot, assured that his and not Danton's methods were to prevail, threw in his lot with his colleagues: Carrier, summoned from Nantes to account for his proconsulship, and endeavouring to head a Hébertist revolt, was thwarted by the solid front presented by the Committee; and the rare spectacle was witnessed of the government triumphing over insurrection. On March 17 Hébert, Vincent, Ronsin, and seventeen others were arrested, and dragged before the Revolutionary Tribunal. Many of the party temporarily, and some permanently, escaped justice: Pache because of his insignificance, Hanriot with Bouchotte and his following by deserting their colleagues. The trial of the Hébertists was the usual parody of justice; and on March 24, displaying abject cowardice, they perished on the scaffold.

The fall and death of Hébert were greeted with general acclamation, ill-informed men no doubt believing that it heralded the promised reign of clemency. They were soon to find out their mistake. Collot and Billaud had only consented to the destruction of the Hébertists on the understanding that the Terror should continue on the old lines. As a guarantee they had demanded the sacrifice of Danton and his party; to this proposal Robespierre, it was said, at first offered some feeble opposition, terrified no doubt at the prospect of flying at such dangerous game: but, these scruples being quickly overcome, he threw himself into his task with venomous ferocity. It was to Saint-Just however that the attack was entrusted; Robespierre seems to have absolutely convinced that inexorable republican of the "*incivisme*" of the Dantonists; and on March 30 Saint-Just read to the Committees of Public Safety and General Security a report for which Robespierre himself had provided notes. On the same evening the Dantonists were arrested.

Next morning in the Convention Legendre, with a flash of courage, demanded a hearing at the bar for his leader, but Robespierre venomously replied that "Danton was not privileged," and that they "wanted no idols"; and, after Barère had elaborated Robespierre's arguments, Legendre was so cowed that he withdrew his motion with profuse apologies. Saint-Just then read to the Convention the report which Robespierre had put into his mouth. It was a ludicrous tissue of falsehoods from beginning to end; every incident in Danton's career was distorted in an unfavourable light; he had been allied with every *contre-révolutionnaire* in turn, with Mirabeau, the Lameths, Dumouriez, Brissot; he had lain hidden on August 10 (of which day he had of course been, as even Saint-Just must have known, the life and soul); he had conspired with England against his country (true enough if to advocate peaceable relations with foreign Powers is conspiracy); he was an Orléanist (but if so, how much more Robespierre); had protected Malouet, Duport, Talleyrand (true, perhaps, but no crime); had been the enemy of Marat (in common with every

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reasonable man); the friend of the Gironde (certainly, in so far as he had desired their downfall without desiring their death); had played fast and loose in Belgium (this was probably true); had raised a levy in March to lay Paris bare to the aristocrats; had provoked the *Conjuration* of March 9 (these wildly false); had demanded the head of Hanriot after June 2 (possibly, but Hanriot had been a Hébertist, and was very nearly sent to the guillotine by Robespierre himself); had conferred with the Queen in the Temple (false, but with a substratum of truth, inasmuch as he had tried to use the Queen's life as a counter in foreign relations); had been responsible for the *Vieux Cordelier* (Robespierre forgot to tell Saint-Just that he himself had corrected the proofs). Even his action in securing the permanence of the Committee was twisted against him.

The venom and the mendacity of the Report must have gone far to discount its effect, had not the Convention been slavishly subservient to its author. But Saint-Just's oratory also had the ring of conviction; he had little first-hand knowledge of Danton's career, had taken little share in the earlier days of the Revolution, had latterly been four months absent, and had accepted in all good faith Robespierre's mendacious story of what had occurred in his absence. Cowed certainly by fear of Robespierre, influenced perhaps by the fanaticism of Saint-Just, the Convention confirmed the arrest of the Dantonists. On April 2 their trial commenced. With Danton, Lacroix, Hérault, Desmoulins, Westermann (who however was only arrested on April 2), and Philippeaux, the real *faction des indulgents*, were ranged at the bar Fabre d'Églantine, who had been awaiting trial on a charge of peculation since January 12, a number of men of foreign names and extraction charged with being foreign spies, and Chabot and Bazire accused of simple malversation. None of these, with the exception of Fabre, were Dantonists at all. They were introduced merely to obscure the issue, and to give colour to the charges of peculation brought against Danton. Among the counts of accusation were venality to the Court, peculation in Belgium, opposition to June 2, complicity in the Baron de Batz' plot, and conspiracy with Dumouriez. In the minor charges there was probably some truth, for Danton was notoriously careless in money matters and had openly lamented the fate of the Girondins. The rest were absurd; and, as Danton urged, his whole Revolutionary career gave them the lie.

But Danton knew that what was required of the Tribunal was not justice but a sentence of death; and his defence became a series of appeals to the crowd. Danton was the most powerful mob-orator that the Revolution had produced; and during the whole of April 3 his great voice rang through the building, through the neighbouring streets, and was audible even across the river. It really seemed that popular opinion might be roused to declare in his favour. The Committee saw the danger, saw also that the Convention was ready on the slightest pretext to rescind its vote and release the prisoners. Accordingly on April 4

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Billaud produced an utterly imaginary story of a Dantonist conspiracy against the Convention; and Saint-Just read a letter from the Revolutionary Tribunal, which asserted falsely that the accused were calling for witnesses from the Convention and appealing to the people. Thus instigated, the Convention decreed the outlawry of any prisoner who "interrupted the course of justice." The jury then declared themselves satisfied with the evidence. The prisoners were removed, and the jury deliberated. Sentence of death was conveyed to them in their cells, for the Court dared not run the risk of further scenes. On the evening of April 5 the prisoners were executed. Thus was Danton treacherously hounded to death, with a crowd of common malefactors.

Robespierre, his rivals on either hand removed, was now supreme; by cunning and stealthy intrigue he had secured support on every side. The remnant of the fallen parties, spared for that very purpose, cowered subservient, simply to preserve their own lives; the Commune, renovated after the fall of Hébert, now boasted a Robespierrist Mayor (Fleuriot Lescot) and a Robespierrist *Agent National* (Payan). On April 1 the *Conseil Exécutif* had been replaced by a group of Convention Committees, in each of which Robespierre's nominees predominated, while in the Jacobin Club his influence was greater than ever. In the two great Committees however his ascendancy was less assured. In the Committee of Public Safety he had the devoted allegiance of Couthon and Saint-Just; but that of Billaud, Collot, and Barère grew daily more doubtful, while that of Carnot and the "workers" depended on the freedom allowed them in their several departments. In the *Comité de Sûreté Générale*, much alienated by the intrusion into its legitimate sphere of action of Robespierre's spies and agents, he could only count on David and Lebas. But in the Revolutionary Tribunal his influence was unbounded. In the Convention itself, which, if it still retained the prestige of its name, had fallen into a condition of shameful paralysis, though his policy was gradually alienating the *Montagnards*, Robespierre could rely more and more on the support of the Plain as the price of his all-powerful protection.

It is clear therefore that Robespierre's power rested on substantial foundations. What use he desired to make of it it is difficult to say. Cunning rather than perspicacious, his tactics were superior to his strategy. The fatuity of an attempt to establish a millennium by the simple means of killing all who failed to attain the required standard of virtue must have been patent to any but the blindest theorist. That an endless Terror must at length provoke a desperate reaction was obvious. Robespierre does not seem to have realised the certain outcome of his policy; had he done so, Danton's fate would have reminded him of the danger that lurked in the word "mercy," and his cowardice would have forbidden him to relax the Terror. It is perhaps however fairer to credit him with being a pure theorist, endowed with little practical foresight but with an

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unfailing faculty of feline cunning. This cunning now prompted him simply to cling to power and to strike down every rival in mere self-preservation. Ambition urged him in the direction of dictatorship, cowardice drew him back from so dangerous a goal; as a compromise between these conflicting motives he began to aim at becoming the dominating influence in a Convention already emasculated, and in a Committee which he would have emasculated had he dared.

Blind though he was, Robespierre perceived that he needed some positive doctrines to capture popularity. Cut off by physical causes — to his immense chagrin — from military triumphs, despising Saint-Just's puerile schemes for the reorganisation of society, he turned to religion to supply the want. There was in him, moreover, a vein of mysticism, a touch of sacerdotalism; and it was possibly to gratify these natural propensities, rather than from any profound policy, that he now embarked on his mission of imposing a new religion on the country. On May 7 he laid down the doctrines of immortality and the existence of a "Supreme Being," appointed thirty-six annual festivals, and fixed June 8 for an inaugural *fête* to the new Deity. This departure was a direct blow at many of Robespierre's colleagues; to Barère, Billaud, Collot, to all who preserved any flavour of Hébertism, the new religion was a vexatious farce. To the parade of incorruptibility and "virtue," qualities utterly distasteful to men so corrupt and vicious, was now added this talk of immortality and the existence of God. Robespierre's colleagues greeted his scheme with ill-disguised annoyance and a contempt which stung him to the quick; but they did not dare to break with him. They were in fact in a very difficult position. Wilder Terrorists than the arch-Terrorist himself, they had earned his displeasure by the indiscriminate and disorderly use of the methods which he desired to regulate and organise. Billaud, Collot, and Barère saw the gulf widening between themselves and Robespierre, but had no one to whom they could turn save to the Moderates in whose eyes they were tyrants more bloodstained than Robespierre himself. Thus for the time they swallowed their discontent and sullenly watched the preparations for the *fête*. June 8 was a day of brilliant sunshine and the Convention assembled in gala dress before the Tuileries. To them, after a prolonged and much criticised delay, appeared Robespierre, adorned with a violet coat and bearing a "symbolic" bouquet. He had got himself chosen President and had thus secured the leading *rôle* on the great occasion. Mounting a *tribune* he delivered an ecstatic Rousseauist harangue, and then headed a procession into the gardens where a huge group of wooden statues had been erected, representing Atheism surrounded by Vices and Folly and threatened by Wisdom. Atheism was set on fire but refused to catch, and *Sagesse* got singed — an unhappy augury. After this came another speech; then a hymn; and the procession marched to the Champ de Mars. Here Robespierre ascended an artificial "*monticule*"

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while a hymn by Marie-Joseph Chénier was chanted. A salvo of artillery brought the proceedings to a close.

Such was the "*Fête de l'Être Suprême.*" If anyone thought that it heralded a reign of moderation he was soon undeceived. Only two days had elapsed when Robespierre introduced a law which was to complete the structure of the Terror. The Law of 22 Prairial was a sharpening of its most serviceable weapon — the Revolutionary Tribunal. All forms of evidence, material, moral, verbal, or written, were henceforth permitted. The right to denounce conspirators was accorded to all citizens, and that of delivering persons to the Tribunal extended to the two Committees, the Public Prosecutor, the *Représentants en mission*, and the Convention. The last privilege of the Convention, the immunity of its members from arrest save by consent of the Convention itself, was removed. The outcry on all sides was tremendous. It has been pleaded that Robespierre intended to employ this law to strike down the ultra-Terrorists and then to close the Terror. The first part of this assumption is undoubtedly true, the last as undoubtedly false; the Law of 22 Prairial was no disguised herald of mercy but simply a means of increasing, legalising, and regulating the Terror.

In face of this terrific decree the scattered forces of Robespierre's opponents closed up their ranks. Some confusion arises from the names attached at different times to different parties, for parties themselves dispersed and coalesced like the changing patterns of a kaleidoscope: it is necessary, however, to realise that at midsummer there was being formed out of the dregs of the Hébertist and Dantonist parties a group of *Montagnards*, who were to be the first agents in the overthrow of the Terror. The leaders of this party were Tallien, Barras, and Legendre; every day recruits were pouring in, and included even some members of the Plain. Thus Cambon, Bourdon of the Oise, Dubois-Crancé, Léonard Bourdon, Merlin of Thionville, Sieyès, and, most important of all, Fouché, the one man qualified to meet Robespierre on his own ground of subterranean intrigue, were all now busily organising resistance to the tyrant.

The Law of 22 Prairial stimulated this resistance, and for the moment seemed likely to secure the aid of the anti-Robespierrists of the Committee. On July 23 Robespierre was hotly reproached by Billaud with having passed his law without submitting it to the Committee. Billaud's indecision however is demonstrated by his unwillingness on the one hand openly to support Tallien, and his refusal on the other to join Robespierre (26 Prairial) in the proscription of the recalcitrant deputies. Disappointed at Billaud's half-heartedness, Robespierre now naïvely suggested that he might go on mission; but the ruse was too apparent.

The arrest on 27 Prairial of a certain Catharine Théot, a religious maniac whom he had patronised, was a further rebuff to Robespierre on his most sensitive side. He succeeded, however, though not without

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great difficulty, in stifling the proceedings; and now, greatly wounded in dignity, he withdrew from the sittings of Convention and Committee, surrounding himself with an atmosphere of mystery and isolation, and attending only the meetings of the Jacobin Club.

Yet during this period of semi-retirement relations between Robespierre and his colleagues were not broken off; nor can he during this period be exonerated from responsibility for the Terror, which now reached its height. Until June 30 he continued to attend his own bureau, and even after that he attended at least one meeting of the Committees before July 18. He doubtless thought that sinister silence would be more persuasive with his antagonists, especially with those of the *Sûreté Générale*, than any active altercation. He was also waiting for a reverse to French arms to provide him with his opportunity. It never came, and the victory of Fleurus was a sad blow to his plans. Meanwhile, by his practical abstention from the Committees he undermined their influence by his parade of pique; but, intending as he did to continue to govern through them, after he had once purged them of the discordant element, he was careful not to sever completely his connexion with them. The interest of the early days of Thermidor lies in the hesitations of the various groups aware of their danger to unite against the tyrant. The threatened *Montagnards* of the Convention were, as we have seen, rapidly organising under the astute guidance of Fouché; but the Committee of Public Safety was in a very difficult position. Recognising that Robespierre had determined to sacrifice them, its members looked around for allies, but were little tempted to join the *Montagnards*, who regarded the downfall of Robespierre only as a step to the overthrow of the whole Committee.

For many critical days they halted between two opinions. The attack on Robespierre had been commenced on July 19 with the arrest of Vilate and Naulin, two of Robespierre's creatures on the Revolutionary Tribunal, and with the acquittal by the Tribunal of a certain Rousselin, a journalist against whom he had a grudge. The meeting of the two Committees on July 20 seems also to have gone against him; but two days later, when he attended, by invitation, a similar meeting, a reconciliation was apparently arranged, the Committee undertaking to see that the Revolutionary Tribunal attended to its work, and even listening with equanimity to a speech of Saint-Just in which he urged the necessity of a dictatorship. At this meeting Saint-Just was empowered to draw up a report, and it was said that lists for a great proscription were being prepared.

Deserted in this fashion by the great Committee, the minor Committee and the Conventionals looked piteously to the Plain for help. But the men of the Plain were still to all appearance the docile satellites of the tyrant. Recent developments however had begun to open their eyes. After 22 Prairial it was no longer possible to credit Robespierre with the

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intention of either ending or moderating the Terror; and the deputies of the Plain were beginning to realise that he only intended to use them, perhaps to sacrifice them, for his own ends. The recent talk of dictatorship had alarmed them, nor can they have been quite oblivious to the utter ignominy of their slavish position. Their support of Robespierre therefore was purely selfish; once satisfied that the conspiracy was likely to succeed they would join in it with glad relief. With all the perspicacity of trimmers, they probably also guessed how quickly the Terror would crumble at the first check.

Meanwhile within the Committee opinion was violently divided. Billaud, whose attitude throughout the crisis is most puzzling, still scouted the notion that Robespierre really intended to throw over his colleagues; Carnot and Lindet were much more decided, and on July 24 Carnot, influenced possibly by military reasons, despatched a large part of the Parisian artillery to the front. Considering the important part which the *Canonniers* had played in every previous revolt, this step was significant, and was violently denounced by Couthon in the Jacobin Club. On the same day the Jacobins solemnly denounced Robespierre's enemies before the Convention.

Robespierre himself, with an orator's vanity, was now relying on the effect of the great speech which he was composing, and which on 8 Thermidor (July 26) he delivered in the Convention. It was specious, subtle, indirect, shifty, in fact an admirable specimen of his oratory; except the financiers, Ramel and Mallarmé, it implicated no one, but it made everyone uncomfortable, and, instead of awing men into obedience, it terrified them into resistance. Even Saint-Just was disappointed, and the speech had certainly been inadequate to the occasion; not because Robespierre's oratory had fallen below its usual level, but because his character was utterly incapable of coping with a crisis which demanded directness either of speech or action. The Convention, however, applauded by force of habit; and the customary decree "that the speech be printed" was carried. Had Robespierre been content with this all might have been well, but he attempted to push his triumph further; and Couthon demanded the circulation of the speech in the Departments. This proposal reopened the discussion; and, although Couthon's motion was carried, Robespierre lost ground as each implicated deputy rose — Cambon, Vadier, Dumont, Billaud, Panis, Fréron — and faced him; he was driven into paroxysms of fury, but could find no words to reply. The Plain's confidence was thus greatly shaken, and in the end Couthon's decree was revoked. Fréron, however, had greatly disconcerted the anti-Robespierrist members of the Committees by demanding a restriction of their powers, a suggestion which revealed the *Montagnards'* position in its true light. However when the Convention rose at 5 p.m. the result was still in doubt; Robespierre declared himself satisfied; his enemies were still divided, and the Plain, he thought, still leant to him. During

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the night neither party was idle. Tallien, Barras, Fréron, and Fouché took matters into their own hands, and determined to strike, whatever Billaud did. They encouraged the *Montagnards* to believe that, with Robespierre, the Committees must fall, and gave the Plain to understand that Robespierre was not meditating the close of the Terror but only the fall of his rivals. Robespierre meanwhile, his energy seemingly unimpaired by the great heat and his prolonged oratorical effort, hurried to the Jacobins to repeat his speech there. Its success was the greater in that it had been prepared rather for that audience than for the Convention; and its elusive phraseology was thoroughly to the taste of the club, which utterly refused to listen to Collot and Billaud when they attempted to reply. Payan, Lescot, and Coffinhal now suggested the seizure of the Tuileries; but Robespierre, with his confidence in his own oratory restored, and always timid at any suggestion of action, declined to adopt a step which would certainly have put victory into his hands.

Meanwhile in the Committee of Public Safety, which was engaged in an all-night sitting, Saint-Just was watching Robespierre's interests. The Committee, finding the problem of how to destroy the tyrant without destroying the tyranny insoluble, was utterly paralysed. There was a stormy scene between Collot and Saint-Just; but, when Saint-Just promised to submit the great speech, on the preparation of which he was engaged, to the Committee, before he read it next day in the Convention, comparative harmony was restored.

Next morning both Committee and Convention met at 10. The Committee was waiting for Saint-Just and his speech, when intelligence came that he had begun to deliver it in the Convention: the members hurried to the hall to find Saint-Just in the *tribune*, and Robespierre, in his *Être Suprême* clothes, at the foot of it. But the *Montagnards* had resolved on their course of action. Saint-Just had hardly commenced when he was violently interrupted by Tallien. From that moment no Robespierrist was permitted to speak; Collot, in the chair, answered every attempt with "*Tu n'a pas la parole*"; and the cry of "*À bas le tyran*" drowned every attempt to gain a hearing. Now, Saint-Just, though young and handsome, was physically feeble; Couthon was a paralytic; while Robespierre, though endowed with great endurance, had a weak, shrill voice and no bodily strength. Danton, in Robespierre's position, would have forced himself on the Convention; but there was no one among the Robespierrists with even a measure of Danton's fiery energy or physical power. So, protesting shrilly, they were obliged to listen while Billaud denounced Robespierre as a *Modéré*, and Tallien, waving a dagger over the tyrant's head, got *séance permanente* decreed. At 2 p.m. there was a call for Barère. The arch-trimmer, who was armed with two speeches, had decided to deliver the one directed against Robespierre; but he attacked mildly and indirectly, proposing only the abolition of the office of *Commandant Général* of the National Guard.

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This motion, which involved the suspension of Hanriot, was carried. Then, when Vadier intervened and began to chatter about Catharine Théot, Tallien, the stage-manager of the conspiracy, took up the tale. Robespierre, exasperated, made a grand effort to mount the *tribune*, but his voice was drowned by the President's bell. Finally the motion for his accusation was carried; his brother and Le Bas bravely rushed to his side, and, with Couthon and Saint-Just, were included in the decree. Robespierre's last despairing appeal to his late supporters of the Plain had failed; they had thrown him to the lions. The accused were hurried off to the hall of the *Comité de Sûreté Générale* for temporary confinement there, and the Convention broke up at 5 p.m.

Meanwhile the Commune, which had all along been preparing a rising, had decided that the crisis was one in which the people should perform that "most sacred duty of insurrection" recommended by the Constitution of 1793, and that they themselves should once again commence to act as the sovereign representatives of the people. All day Hanriot had been stirring up the proletariate, while the Commune was busy receiving the allegiance of various Sections. On receipt of the news of Robespierre's arrest, Hanriot galloped off in a drunken fury, and penetrated to the hall of the *Comité de Sûreté Générale*, only however to find himself arrested (7.30 p.m.). The prisoners were now hurried off to various places of detention, Robespierre himself to the Luxembourg. There, however, the gaolers refused to admit him, with the result that he was conveyed to the Mairie, which was technically a place of detention, but where he found himself among friends. He was therefore practically free, though formally a prisoner, a situation which greatly commended itself to his duplicity of character. Meanwhile, the *Conseil Général* of the Commune had met at 5.30, the *tocsin* rang, and considerable insurrectionary forces assembled on the Place de Grève. The barriers were closed, a provisional government was appointed (significant measure), and Robespierre, after repeated refusals to leave his haven of refuge at the Mairie, was at length (11 p.m.) persuaded to join his friends at the Hôtel de Ville. In breaking his arrest Robespierre, as he must have known, had exposed himself to a decree of outlawry; and, once *hors la loi*, he had only to be caught, identified, and hurried to execution. Nothing short of a determination to put himself at once at the head of an armed insurrection would have justified his departure from the Mairie.

Nothing, however, was further from Robespierre's thoughts; action of any kind, especially if it involved physical danger, was repugnant to him. On his arrival at the Hôtel de Ville, therefore, he took no active measures against the Convention, but sat with his friends, discussing the address, in which the *coup d'état* should be communicated to the armies. His presence at the Hôtel de Ville only paralysed Hanriot, who, having been released at 8.30, was once more in command of the insurrectionary forces. The inaction of Hanriot is indeed a curious feature of the crisis.

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The most plausible solution seems to be that, his neck having been practically in the noose with the Hébertists, he had every reason to know the danger of offending Robespierre ; he was also alive to Robespierre's jealousy and abhorrence of everything that savoured of militarism, and thus feared to strike a decisive blow, lest its very success should prove fatal to himself.

While the Commune was thus wasting its opportunity, the Convention, which had met again shortly after 7 p.m., was not slow to avail itself of its good fortune. The bearding of the tyrant that morning had restored self-respect to the Plain ; and now, though in a most perilous position, they quitted themselves for the first time like men. Billaud and the members of the Committee had flocked to the Convention for safety, but it was not they who led the Assembly ; they played, indeed, but a sorry part in the proceedings. Robespierre, Hanriot, and all who supported him were decreed "*hors la loi*." The Convention had seized on the weak spot in Robespierre's armour. Barras was next appointed commander of the armed force, and at 11 p.m. rode out with twelve followers to raise the loyal Sections, with the result that by 1.30 a.m. he had gathered about 6000 men on the Place du Carrousel.

Astonished, no doubt, that the Commune had not long since attacked, but resolved to profit by their good fortune, the Conventionals at about 1.30 a.m. advanced against the mob in the Place de Grève.

About forty members of the Commune were sitting with the Robespierrists. Great was their astonishment to find the cannon on the Grève pointed at the Hôtel de Ville ; Hanriot rushed in crying that all was lost. By the time the assailants entered the chamber Le Bas had shot himself, Hanriot had taken refuge in a sewer, Augustin Robespierre had leapt from the window, Couthon was beneath the table, and Robespierre's jaw was shattered by a pistol-shot, whether self-inflicted, or the work of a certain Méda, who afterwards claimed the honour, has never been decided. The members of the Commune made no resistance, and were quickly arrested.

What had happened to turn the tables so dramatically ? Robespierre had so far forgotten his treatment in the Convention that morning as to scout the idea of the Conventionals daring to attack. Nothing therefore had been done to keep the crowd on the Grève together, and a heavy fall of rain had sent many of them home. The remainder seemed to have been not unwilling to join Barras and the Conventionals when they arrived. Thus the Hôtel de Ville had been carried without a shot fired.

Identification of the prisoners was now the only formality ; this was quickly got through. The two Robespierres, both much hurt, but alive and conscious, Saint-Just, Couthon, Hanriot, Dumas, Payan, Lescot, Vivier, Simon, and twelve others, were conveyed amidst scenes of indescribable excitement and popular rejoicing to the Place de la Révolution, and there beheaded on 10 Thermidor (July 28).

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CHAPTER XIII

THE THERMIDORIAN REACTION AND THE END OF THE CONVENTION

THE events of the Ninth of Thermidor provoked throughout France scenes of unparalleled excitement: the streets of Paris were filled with an exultant and as it were unmuzzled crowd, which gave vent to its feelings in fierce execrations against the tyrant and the ninety-five of his associates who followed him to the scaffold.

More gradual of course, but not less effectual, was the unmuzzling of provincial France. It took some time for men to realise that the tyrant was actually dead, but on realising it the whole country heaved with a vast sigh of joy and relief. The Terror indeed, through the energy of the Terrorist commissioners, had been no whit less atrocious in the Provinces than in the capital. We have already seen something of it at Nantes, Lyons, and Toulon; and the atrocities of Lebon at Arras, of Tallien at Bordeaux, and of Maignet at Marseilles and Orange, equalled and perhaps even surpassed those of the more famous proconsuls. Of the total number of victims no estimate is possible. Taine enumerates 17,000 who certainly perished; but this figure undoubtedly falls far short of the actual total. The Revolutionary Tribunal of Paris, however, has left a complete record of its activity. Between April 6, 1793 (the date of its installation) and 9 Thermidor, it sent to the scaffold 2625 persons, of whom no fewer than 1366 were condemned in the seven weeks inaugurated by the Law of 22 Prairial and terminated by the fall of Robespierre. During that period about 80 per cent. of those accused before it were sentenced to death.

To suggest that the fiendish excesses of the government had been in any sense acceptable to the mass of Frenchmen is ludicrous, inasmuch as it was against that very mass of Frenchmen, rather than against Royalists, Reactionaries, or Girondins, that those atrocities had been directed. Men were robbed, maltreated, and killed, not because they were aristocrats or opponents of the government, but from motives of plunder and revenge, or from pure lust of blood; and this not for the salvation of France, but for the benefit of a gang of corrupt scoundrels, who, in the judgment

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of one of the shrewdest contemporary observers of the Revolution, could claim in Paris no more than 8000 adherents. Again, the idea that the Terror was introduced and maintained in order to secure victory for the French arms, or that it conduced to that victory, is as unwarranted as the belief that it was sanctioned or condoned by the nation as a whole. Time after time the indifference of the government to the safety of the frontiers and the armies is conclusively proved. Except in so far as the Terrorist government included the men who organised victory, and who tolerated the Terror, not as contributing to victory, but because they were determined to remain in office, the Terror had no connexion with the success of the French arms. The victories of the Republic were won not because but in spite of the Terror, and were due to the fact that the majority of Frenchmen were not Terrorists, but patriots at heart. Patriotism — to fight for France — was still possible, almost the only thing possible for the tortured nation. The one way to be safe and to escape from the horrible nightmare, was to reach the front as quickly as possible. There, instead of "Jacobin," "Patriot," or "Aristocrat," one could be a Frenchman again.

For two years the nation, gagged and spell-bound, had submitted to the tyranny of savage and self-seeking miscreants. So complete had been the organisation of the Terror that one wonders how, if its authors had not turned and rent each other, France could ever have shaken herself free. But, the spell once broken by the downfall of Robespierre, the true voice of France was heard once more, weak and hollow at first like the voice of one long dumb, but increasing soon to an angry roar, denouncing the remnants of the tyranny, and dominating the political situation. The strife of parties, the intrigue of factions, the attitude of individual leaders, so long the sole factors in politics, now retired into their proper subordination; while beyond and above them the voice of public opinion reasserted itself.

Not only did men begin to talk freely once more in the streets, but the press, after a forced silence of two years, raised its voice again. Until the summer of 1792 the public press, though much intimidated, may be said to have retained a measure of independence. Mallet du Pan, one of the most courageous as he was one of the wisest men of the period, had indeed continued calmly in Paris editing his Moderate journal, the *Mercure*, in face of appalling dangers, up to the very eve of the fall of the Monarchy. The cessation of the *Mercure* marks the final blow at the freedom of the press; from that time only journals of the most radical nature were permitted to appear, and the standard of radicalism grew rapidly more exacting until such gutter rags as Marat's *L'Ami du Peuple* and Hébert's *Le Père Duchesne* became the leading organs of the Parisian press. The language used by these journals, especially by Hébert's, is a sufficient indication of the class of readers to whom they appealed; and the expedients to which their editors were driven to make them pay shows that they were far from being really popular. Marat,

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for instance, stole the Royalist printing-presses in September, 1792; and Hébert extorted enormous subventions from the War Office for the circulation of his filthy print among the soldiers. Thus during the Terror the public press had entirely ceased to fulfil its functions; and one of the earliest signs of the reawakening of public opinion after Thermidor is the liberation of journalism. Chief among the reactionary journals was Fréron's *L'Orateur du Peuple*, which began to reappear on September 11.

Nor was there any ambiguity in the interpretation that public opinion, thus liberated, put upon the *coup d'état*. Everywhere, in the streets of Paris, in the Provinces, not least in the teeming prisons, the news of Robespierre's fall was acclaimed as the close of the Terror and as the signal for summary vengeance on its authors. In the prisons in particular the intelligence was greeted with an outburst of relief which it is difficult to picture. The prisons indeed, crowded as they were with victims of every class, from the genuine loyalist to the humble *bourgeois* who had dared to prefer coin to assignats, had become a not unimportant register of popular feeling. Within their walls had grown up a social order of strangely pathetic interest. Each inmate was on the brink of eternity, and death was so near that it became but an incident in the day; determined as they were to make the most of the few hours, the few days, at most the few weeks, they had to live, the gaiety of these unfortunates was scarcely interrupted by the entrance of the turnkey for his daily toll of victims. To one who walked the streets of the unnatural Paris of that ghastly period not the least strange sound must have been that of laughter and merriment from barred windows. Only a few days before Thermidor rumours of approaching massacre had brooded over the prisons; and on the very eve of the *coup d'état* a batch of forty-five had been duly executed, thus missing reprieve by a few hours only. The outburst of relief in the prisons was happily justified by the prompt release of hundreds whose presence was required by the Thermidorians to swell the tide of public opinion against the Terrorist government; and, although on September 6 there were still 5261 prisoners and on October 7 as many as 4445, these were for the most part genuine Royalists who could not safely be set free.

Having noted the construction which public opinion put upon the crisis, we may now examine the attitude of parties. The intricate *coup d'état* described in the last chapter had been effected by the coalition of several parties for one common immediate end. All had desired the downfall of Robespierre, but not all with the same ulterior object. The anti-Robespierrists of the Committees, such as Collot and Billaud, had aimed their blow at the person of their colleague, not in any sense at the system which he embodied, still less at the government of which he had been the head and of which they were all members. The Thermidorians on the other hand, that is the anti-Robespierrist *Montagnards*, regarded Robespierre's fall as a step to the overthrow of the government and the

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seizure of power by themselves, and had no idea of accepting the domination of his colleagues now that he was himself overthrown. But there had been a third party to the alliance which had brought about the *coup d'état*. The Plain, or *Modérés*, of the Convention, having broken their long and shameful silence, were not inclined to put their necks under any fresh yoke, and, the spell of the Terror once lifted, were determined not to submit to any re-establishment of the conditions which had reduced them to such a pitch of misery and shame. We shall now see the profit of the Thermidorian Revolution turn, not to the principals in the struggle, but to these despised auxiliaries; it did so because, in their desire to conclude the Terror, they simply reflected the great body of reawakened public opinion of which we have just spoken.

Billaud, Collot, Barère, and the Terrorists of the *Comité de Sûreté Générale*, regarded the outbreak of popular jubilation with disgust and alarm, and greeted the first measure of reaction — the proposal that after a fortnight, during which period it could dispose of "Robespierre's tail," the Revolutionary Tribunal should be reconstituted — with uncompromising hostility. The passing of this proposal, in spite of their opposition, was sufficient indication that Thermidor was to be the end, not only of Robespierre, but of the Terror. Fouquier-Tinville, whose continuance in office had been proposed by Barère, was actually impeached on August 1; and the Law of 22 Prairial was then repealed. On August 10 the Tribunal was reorganised, with the result that, after the execution of the minor Robespierrists (August 13), till the end of Fructidor (September 16), out of 293 accused only 14 were condemned; from September 17 to October 21 24 out of 312; in Brumaire 5 out of 236; in Frimaire 3 out of 105; and in Pluviôse none out of 30.

Further proof of the reactionary turn things were taking was forthcoming in the reconstruction of the Committee of Public Safety. The first reconstruction, however, on July 31, was no victory for the Moderates any more than for the Terrorists, and turned to the advantage of the Thermidorians proper, who desired to reorganise rather than to abolish the existing system of government, and to dominate rather than to destroy the Committee. Of its eleven members, four were dead, to wit the three Terrorists and Hérault. Bon Saint-André and Prieur of the Marne were absent on missions; and of the six members chosen to fill these vacancies, four were Thermidorians (Tallien, Thuriot, Bréard, and Treilhard), while two were Jacobins (Eschassériaux and Laloi). The Committee thus became in tone Thermidorian, with a strong dash of Carnot; its policy was to adjust and moderate, but not to stop the despotism; to continue the war, and to maintain the Revolutionary government, with a purged Jacobin Club and a reformed Revolutionary Tribunal.

The Plain, however, strengthened by the return to public life of many *Conventionnels* and encouraged by the evidences of popular reaction,

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had already, while the Terrorists and Thermidorians were struggling for the control of the Committee, struck the first blow at the supremacy of the Committee itself. On 11 Thermidor it was enacted that one-quarter of the members should retire each month. On August 23 this change was developed into a complete reorganisation of the whole system of government; the twenty-one existing Committees of the Convention were replaced by sixteen, amongst which the executive power hitherto monopolised by the Committees of Public Safety and General Security was widely distributed, the sphere of the Committee of Public Safety, in particular, being reduced to the control of war and foreign affairs. Special provisions secured the impossibility of any permanent personal supremacy in the great Committee; and consecutiveness and vigour of policy were sacrificed to the determination to avoid a repetition of the state of affairs which had just been ended.

The work of breaking the old authorities proceeded vigorously throughout the month of August. By decrees of August 12 and 28 the powers of *Représentants en mission* were curtailed. The licence hitherto accorded to clubs and popular societies was withdrawn; the Jacobin Club, it is true, continued to exist until November 12, but after 9 Thermidor repeated interferences with its action rendered it comparatively innocuous. A corresponding decline crippled also the influence of provincial societies; and the scope of the Revolutionary Committees, which had been so serviceable to Robespierre, was greatly circumscribed. On August 24 the Committees of small towns were suppressed. The number of provincial Committees was restricted to one for each district; and in Paris their number was reduced from forty-eight to twelve, while at the same time their powers were greatly curtailed.

The violent Robespierrism displayed by the municipality of Paris had brought upon it a similar fate. On July 27 it was abolished, those of its functionaries who had played a conspicuous part in the recent crisis being sent to the scaffold. On August 31 a number of Commissioners were appointed by the Convention to take over the municipal government, the police administration remaining in the hands of the *Comité de Sûreté Générale*. Of all the old municipal organisation the Sections alone remained; and they continued, as we shall see, to be a potent influence in political matters. Alterations in the control of the National Guard had been rendered inevitable by the conspicuous part which Hanriot had played in Thermidor. A staff of five, appointed for ten days at a time and elected by lot from the Section commanders, now replaced the single *Commandant Général*. The senior member of this staff was to command for five days, but orders were only valid when signed by three staff-officers.

These precautions were of course profoundly distasteful to the old members of the Committee. Many even of the Thermidorians were alarmed at the great revulsion of popular feeling. The release of the

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prisoners of the Terror had been forced on them by the necessity of keeping the power out of the hands of the old government; but the great outcry against the "patriots" and the clamour for vengeance on those who had been responsible for the wreckage of property and social order were above and beyond anything they had contemplated. This popular outcry against the Terrorists came to a head with the trial of 132 prisoners from Nantes, whom Carrier had handed to the Parisian tribunal in the previous January. Their trial had been delayed and only began on September 7; then for the first time the full extent of the Nantes atrocities was revealed; and, accustomed though it was to the sight of blood, Paris experienced a tremor of horrified disgust. Public indignation rose to boiling-point. On the other hand the anger of the Jacobin Club was stirred by the "unpatriotic" attitude of the populace. An attempt to assassinate Tallien, which was attributed to their machinations, enhanced their growing unpopularity.

On September 14 the trial ended in the acquittal of the prisoners and the impeachment of the Nantes tribunal. This of course implicated Carrier, and through him the members of the old Committee, on whose instructions he had acted. The crisis was therefore a grave one for Billaud and his colleagues. Fiercely they argued that the whole Convention, having appointed the Committee, was responsible for the Terror, and by every expedient the impeachment of Carrier was postponed; but public outcry increased with every fresh revelation, and at last it became necessary to deliver Carrier to his enemies. Elaborate precautions were, however, adopted (October 23) to protect deputies from accusations. The government Committees were first to decide that there was ground for suspicion; a Commission of twenty-one, chosen by lot, must then investigate these grounds and report; whereupon a three days' discussion in the Convention was to ensue, in which the accused might take part. All these precautions did not suffice to save Carrier. On October 29 the Committees decided that there was ground for suspicion; the Commission of twenty-one was forthwith appointed, and it reported on November 11. Carrier then defended himself in the Convention, first impudently denying the charges, and then laying the blame on the Committees.

Billaud and his colleagues, seeing their danger, opposed each step in the proceedings with savage but impotent fury. The Convention was against them, and they resorted to the Jacobin Club to give vent to their rage. This moved the reactionary mob to attack the club. On November 9 a free fight took place between the Jacobins and the reactionary bands, which, under the name of "*jeunes gens*," had been organised by Fréron: the *Comité de Sûreté Générale* declined to interfere, and on November 12 the club was closed. This was a stunning blow to the old Terrorist party. Their last support was gone, and they felt the toils closing round them. Carrier was put on trial, and on December 16 sentenced to death with two of his satellites; and the acquittal of the

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remainder of the accused was so unpopular that two days later twenty-six out of thirty were imprisoned again.

During this period parties in the Convention had been undergoing reconstruction. We see three distinct groups gradually emerging. The Independents, a union of certain of the Thermidorians with the Jacobins, all members of the old Mountain, represented the extreme of Republicanism, short of absolute Hébertism or absolute Robespierrism; they desired the destruction of the remaining Robespierrists, but the maintenance of all the leading Terrorist measures; they inclined to the Left, but to a Left purged of Billaud and Collot, because Billaud and Collot were too dangerous. Among these men were Merlin of Douai, the author of the Law of the Suspect; Barras, the victor of Thermidor; Cambacérès, the most prominent statesman produced by that crisis; and Sieyès, who now once more glides stealthily to the front.

The Thermidorians proper formed the second group; they had been responsible for the recent violent measures against the Jacobins, and in that matter had crossed the Rubicon. Any rehabilitation of the Jacobins would involve them in utter ruin; they therefore inclined more and more to the Right, on whose assistance they relied to keep the Jacobins under; they contemplated, without enthusiasm but with equanimity, the return to the Constitution of 1791 of which their Moderate allies talked, and were willing, in deference to these allies, to relax slightly the cruel severity with which the wretched Dauphin was treated in his dungeon. Of this party were all the mere self-seekers of the Convention, such as Tallien and Fréron, men who did not scruple to have secret communications with *émigrés*; its strength was estimated at 150.

The third group, numbering some 160, was made up of deputies of the old Centre and Right; they regarded the days of the Republic as numbered, and anticipated the restoration of the monarchy and the Constitution of 1791. Without any definite alliance they were able to vote during the early period of the reaction with the Thermidorians against the Independents; and it was the co-operation of these two parties that secured the acceptance of the Moderate legislation of the winter of 1794–5.

Outside the Convention popular opinion grew daily more favourable to reaction. With the relaxation of the Terror the laws which it had introduced became intolerable. The *maximum* in particular, often evaded even in the height of the Terror, now became more oppressive than ever. In spite of an excellent harvest, prices rose to famine height, and the dearness of fuel in a winter remarkable for low temperatures brought misery little short of that caused by scarcity of provisions. Throughout the bitter winter nights great *queues* of shivering citizens huddled in front of the bakers', grocers', and butchers' shops and the barges where fuel was sold, in the hope of securing in the morning a miserable pittance of bad bread, a scrap of meat, or a log of wood.

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Assignats, their security doubly shaken by rumours of peace and suggestions of amnesty to *émigrés*, depreciated daily, while forged notes circulated freely. The abolition of the Commune left the streets of Paris unclean, disorderly, and immoral. The social and economic condition of the capital was indeed worse than at the height of the Terror. There were some who, not without a degree of reason, attributed the distress to the relaxation of the restrictions; but the vast body of public opinion, as revealed to us by the reports of the secret police, cried out for the complete repeal of the *maximum*.

Meanwhile repeated efforts were being made to secure the impeachment of the Terrorist members of the old Committees. So early as August 29 Lecointre, the most excitable of the Thermidorians, had proposed this step; but, although public opinion favoured the accusation, the motion fell to the ground. It led, however, to the withdrawal of Billaud, Barère, and Collot from the Committee of Public Safety. In view of the failure of their efforts to bring their enemies to justice, the Thermidorians looked round for some means of strengthening the Moderate vote in the Convention. The Plain was eager for the release of the seventy-three deputies who had been imprisoned for protesting against June 2; and, in order to secure the overthrow of their antagonists, the Thermidorians now acquiesced in this step. On December 9 the seventy-three returned to the Convention; and, as the Assembly was seldom attended by more than 250 deputies, this accession of strength left the Moderates arbiters of the situation.

The ultimate fate of the members of the old Terrorist government was now assured: but it had been obtained only at the price of surrendering the Convention to the Moderates. The reactionary trend of politics had, however, been displayed, even before the return of the seventy-three, in the extension of an amnesty to the *Vendéen* insurgents. After Savenay the Vendée had been systematically scoured by the "*colonnes infernales*" of General Turreau; and in an incredibly short time had become a smoking desert. But Turreau and his masters soon found that their brutal policy, so far from bearing down the obstinacy of the insurgents, only goaded them to a yet more desperate resistance. Hampered though they were by the daily increasing jealousies of their remaining leaders, the *Vendéens* were yet capable of inflicting heavy damage on the Republic. In Britanny also resistance to the government continued. The disaffection of that Province had originated in the same fashion as that of the Vendée; but the insurrection there had never attained any unity, and had been subdued with comparative ease every time it broke out. But, just because it was without organisation or concentration, it could not be put down at one blow. Under the leadership of Cadoudal, Cotterau, Boishardi, and Cormatin, the *Chouans* (as the Breton rebels were called) carried on a ceaseless guerilla warfare with the troops of the Republic; and, in the summer of 1794, Puisaye,

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an ex-supporter of the Girondins, set out for London to negotiate for English assistance. Hoche, who was sent to Britanny in October, perceived that this was just the kind of war that could only be ended by means of wise diplomacy; he therefore recommended an amnesty for all the western rebels; and on December 1 the government, anxious to end an episode which had proved so disastrous and so costly to the Republic, gave effect to his recommendations. During December, January, and February negotiations for a settlement on the basis of this amnesty were in progress; and, although peace was not concluded until February 15, 1795, the policy which made peace possible dated from December 1, 1794.

The liberation of the seventy-three therefore did little more than accelerate a process which had already commenced; the amnesty to the *Vendéens* was already granted, the attack on the *maximum* had already begun, the sword was already hanging over the heads of the Terrorists. The re-entry into politics of so many Moderates quickly brought matters to a head. On December 22, Johannot and Giraud reported on the *maximum*, and Lecointre proposed to remove it from all commodities except bread; but the Thermidorians were overborne by the Moderates and the weight of public opinion, and on December 23 the law was wholly repealed. The excitement of the abolition of the most obnoxious of the Terrorist measures had scarcely died away, when the blow fell upon those of its authors who survived. Only four days had elapsed when the Committees took courage to report that there was ground for investigating the suspicions against Billaud, Barère, Collot, and Vadier. According to the provisions laid down on October 23 a Commission of twenty-one was appointed; and, although its report was delayed until March 2, there was after December 27 little doubt of the ultimate fate of the Terrorists.

During this period of reaction the revulsions of feeling in the Convention had been steadily reflected in the constantly renovated ranks of the governing Committee. At first its members had been drawn without exception from the old Mountain, the most conspicuous being Cambacérès and Merlin of Douai, together with Carnot and Prieur of the Côte d'Or, whose efficiency in their department made their presence on the Committee essential, so much so that the law was strained to keep them there, and that, when Carnot was at last obliged to withdraw for his month, he continued to control the War Office from outside, and on the expiry of the month was quickly reinstated. In January, however, the increase in the strength of the Moderates of the Convention was reflected in the Committee by the introduction of Boissy d'Anglas, and after him of other members of the old Plain, although they never attained a majority; later we shall find ex-Girondins sitting, so that, at one time or another, practically every shade of opinion was represented.

Considering the constant changes in *personnel*, the *Comité de l'An* III was wonderfully successful in giving to its policy a measure of continuity.

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This was due to the practical permanence of its leading members, such as Merlin of Douai and Cambacérès, who sat for eleven and ten months respectively out of a total of thirteen, and Boissy d'Anglas, Rewbell, and Sieyès, who, though they did not enter the Committee until 1795, sat each for seven months. It was also, and especially, due to the great skill with which it contrived to turn the mind of the Convention to the establishment of an honourable and profitable peace with Prussia. To the extremists, to the Independents as well as to the old Terrorists, the idea of peace with anyone, on any terms, however profitable or glorious, was abhorrent; while to many of the Moderates on the other hand the Committee's indication of the Rhine frontier and "natural" limits as the basis of negotiation seemed likely to necessitate prolonged and ever-recurring hostilities. The Committee was, therefore, in a delicate position between two parties pulling in opposite directions. The Moderates had to be encouraged in order to prevent the extremists reverting to the idea of a general and relentless war; while the *Montagnards* could not be allowed to decline, lest the Moderates should be content with too little. This is the cue to the history of public affairs in the winter and spring of the Year III.

On the whole the government policy tended more and more to favour the Moderates; and the necessity for propitiating the Jacobins only slightly modified this tendency. On December 21 the sale of the property of relations of *émigrés* was stopped, and on the 29th the sequestrated property of German, English, and Spanish subjects was restored. On January 12, 1795, the priests and nobles condemned to deportation were released, while on the 30th a distinctly Moderate report on foreign policy was delivered by Boissy d'Anglas. The Committee was, in fact, hard at work on its peace policy; Barthélemy was busy negotiating with the Prussians at Basel; peace with Tuscany was signed on February 9; on the 15th Charette agreed to accept the liberal terms offered by the government; and peace with the *Vendéens* was signed at La Jaunaie. By this treaty freedom of worship was granted, the royal assignats were redeemed, a local militia 2000 strong was formed, and the *Vendéens* exempted from all other military service. In return Charette acknowledged the Republic and undertook to get the insurgents to lay down their arms. If we accept the undoubted fact that the Vendée rebelled not for royalty, but for religion and as a protest against compulsory military service, and that the mark of Royalism was only subsequently imprinted on an insurrection which was in its origin social and religious, then we must acknowledge that all the real grievances were met by the terms of the Treaty of La Jaunaie.

But the Republic was to find that a guerilla war is almost as difficult to end by terms of treaty as by force of arms. A country with no government, and armies with no commander-in-chief, have not, in fact, the machinery for making treaties. Jealousy of Charette and of his

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assumption of the right to treat made Stofflet and the Abbé Bernier more determined to continue the war. No sooner had Canclaux established Charette, with all ceremony and the military honours of a victor, at Nantes, than he was obliged to lead his troops against these irreconcilables. After a heroic campaign of two months Stofflet was compelled to accept at Saint-Florent the terms of La Jaunaie (May 2). On April 20 the Breton rebels had accepted the same conditions at La Mabilais. Thus by the beginning of May the whole of the rebellious west had, temporarily at least, accepted the Republic.

Meanwhile in Paris the tide of reactionary legislation was swelling fast. Four days after La Jaunaie the government took the important step of conceding liberty of worship. The religious question was one of the most thorny with which the government was confronted. No proof was needed that it was impossible either to abolish religion or to rally it to the Revolution: the whole history of the last two years bore evidence of this: the Vendée, the failure of the cult of Reason and the cult of *l'Être Suprême*, and now the voice of reviving public opinion, all showed that the majority of Frenchmen were irrevocably attached to the Catholic religion. Although the previous year had witnessed the most violent attacks on religion, the Civil Constitution of the clergy had been untouched; and by it the "constitutional" clergy were entitled to their stipends and pensions which had been thrice solemnly guaranteed by the Convention. But in spite of this the stipends had gradually ceased to be paid, and on March 26, 1794, pensions had been abolished, while the closing of churches had finally stopped all payment.

The new government had accepted liability under the Civil Constitution and had (18 Thermidor) decreed the payment of pensions to the abdicated clergy, but, being wholly irreligious, declined to pay stipends. This amounted to a disavowal of the Civil Constitution, which was based on the principle of a State-supported religion. Cambon (September 18) reported to the effect that in future the Republic would decline to support any cult, but that an allowance would be made to officiating clergy equivalent to the pensions of the abdicated. This measure was in the main a financial expedient, but the anti-Christianising policy did not stop here. On December 21 Grégoire, one of the few ecclesiastics of the Convention who had not apostatised, made an impassioned appeal, not for the restoration of State religion, but for the recognition of Catholicism. The Convention vehemently repudiated the suggestion; but public opinion greeted it with enthusiasm. Everywhere churches were reopened; and Catholicism, which had never indeed been wholly suppressed, openly lifted its head. The government dared not interfere, dreading to run counter to public opinion and desiring to conceal its atheism from Europe pending the peace negotiations. Hence in the end it gave effect to Grégoire's proposals in the Law of 3 Ventôse (February 21). The scope of this law was indicated in the speech of Boissy d'Anglas who

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introduced it. No more bitter attack on Christianity had ever been heard in the Convention; "intolerant, bloody, puerile, absurd, and disastrous" were the epithets applied to the Catholic religion; "but," he went on to say, "we must have no Hébertism, no persecution"; superstition would die a natural death. With that he proposed the absolute liberty of all cults; not as a generous recognition of religion, but as a grudging acknowledgment of the political necessity of toleration. Restrictions were heaped upon the liberated forms of worship. Churches were not to be opened; no place of worship was to bear any external sign of its sacred purpose; no public summoning of congregations was permitted; no person was to appear in public in religious habit; all assemblies for worship were placed under police supervision.

Notwithstanding these harsh and spiteful conditions, the Law of 3 Ventôse had granted the essential point, and on this charter the position of religion was actually based until the *Concordat*. Public opinion recognised the importance of the concession and overlooked the barbarous restrictions. The greatest enthusiasm prevailed. The very next day masses were said in Paris, and religious fervour both there and in the Provinces knew no bounds.

It was plain that the reactionary trend of affairs was likely to give the gravest offence to the remnant of the Jacobins, and it was not to be expected that that once omnipotent party would accept without protest this overthrow of all the principles for which it had fought. From the Jacobin point of view the situation was indeed most critical. The streets had become positively dangerous to "patriots" by reason of the licensed violence of the "*jeunes gens*"; the busts of Marat had been consigned to the sewers; Revolutionary Tribunal, Committees, Clubs, National Guard, Commune, all the old weapons of the Terror, had been either blunted or destroyed; the red cap of liberty was everywhere insulted; the great mother Club was ignominiously closed; the guillotine threatened the heroes of 1794; a dangerous licence had been accorded to superstition; the government had already truckled to the rebels of the west and was on the point of truckling to Prussia. Little wonder that the Jacobins regarded the situation with alarm and determined to strike a blow before the catastrophe was completed by the success of Barthélemy's negotiations at Basel.

The economic state of France seemed to favour the Jacobins. The simple repeal of the *maximum* had not sufficed to restore normal conditions to the distressed country; the war continued, and with it the necessity for requisitions and the continued exclusion of external food supply, while the injuries done to internal trade and agriculture were found to be greater than could be remedied by a simple stroke of the pen. The government had indeed been mistaken in repealing the *maximum* so hastily; it would have been wiser to retain it with the promise that after the next harvest it would be removed; by

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that time the conclusion of peace might also have given an impetus to the importation of food-stuffs. As it was, prices seem to have been little affected by the removal of the restrictions on 3 Nivôse (December 23, 1794), while the scarcity continued, and even increased. The government was quite alive to the danger of a famine; and, in its anxiety to allay the popular agitation and to stave off a crisis which would have ruined its negotiations with Prussia, promised (March 13) a pound of bread daily to every citizen of Paris. Unfortunately this was more than it could perform; and it was the failure to redeem this promise that provoked the insurrections of Germinal and Prairial.

Meanwhile Jacobin outbreaks at Toulon and Marseilles prompted the government to further measures against their enemies. On March 2 the Committee of Twenty-one, which had been appointed on December 27 to investigate the charges against Billaud, Collot, Barère, and Vadier, recommended that the accused be sent before the Revolutionary Tribunal. This was done amidst a chorus of approval, but to the intense alarm and disgust of the Jacobins.

But the Convention did not stop here. It determined still further to strengthen the ranks of the Moderates for the impending crisis by restoring to their seats the surviving Girondin deputies. This measure was accepted (March 8) by the Thermidorians as a means of strengthening their hands against the Jacobins. The re-entry of the restored deputies, sixteen in number and including Lanjuinais, Isnard, and Louvet, came as a gage of battle thrown down by the Moderates to the Jacobins. From that day a Jacobin insurrection was a certainty.

It is possible that even without the Jacobin incitements there would have been some kind of outbreak in Paris at this juncture, for the distress was daily increasing. The government, unable to find the promised bread, had begun to substitute rice; further, in declining to guarantee *subsistances* to any but those domiciled in the city, they had done a grave injustice to the considerable floating population, especially to the masons, whose labour ceased during the winter and who were now just returning to Paris with the spring. Bread riots occurred almost daily. Lecointre, who, after the reinstatement of the Girondins, had gone over to the Jacobins, put forward (March 19) a demand for the Constitution of 1793; and while "bread" was the battle-cry of the starving populace, this became the battle-cry of the Jacobins. The demand for the Constitution of 1793 was met by the first indication from the Moderates that their policy comprised the framing of a totally new Constitution. They also passed a strict police-law against *émeutes*, and showed what a grave view they took of the situation by a resolution that, if the Convention were violated, its survivors should, with the *Représentants en mission* and the *suppléants*, constitute themselves a fresh assembly at the town of Châlons.

With that they turned to the discussion on the accused Terrorist

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deputies. For a week the debate continued; and the accused were warmly and bravely defended by their ex-colleagues, Lindet, Prieur of the Côte d'Or, and Carnot, while Paris surged without. The Jacobins brought matters to a head on April 1 (12 Germinal), when a mob of angry citizens broke into the Convention and cried out for "bread and the Constitution of 1793"; they shouted chaotically for four hours, but, much to the disappointment of their Jacobin instigators, did nothing further. Meanwhile the government Committees sounded the alarm in the *bourgeois* quarters, and mustered some battalions of the National Guard, on the approach of which the rioters gradually disbanded. No sooner was the hall cleared than the Convention thundered forth its wrath at the fomenters of the insurrection. The deportation of the accused deputies, in whose favour the movement had been largely designed, was at once carried; and sixteen other Jacobin deputies were decreed arrested—including Léonard Bourdon, Cambon, Amar, and Lecointre. Pichegru, who was just then at the height of his reputation and happened to be in Paris, was put in command of the government forces to stamp out the embers of the insurrection: a task which gave him little difficulty and was completed in two days.

The failure of this insurrection of 12 Germinal told heavily in favour of the Moderates within and without the Convention. The tyranny of the *jeunes gens* recommenced with redoubled vigour; Republicans and all the emblems of their *régime* fell into contempt; and the talk of a restoration of the Monarchy, which had been rife before the insurrection, was revived. The dismay and discomfiture of the Jacobins was complete. Nor were the Moderates of the Convention slow to take advantage of the evil plight of their antagonists. The arrest of the Jacobins involved in the plot was followed by a series of decrees directed against that party. The Committee of Public Safety was increased to sixteen (April 3), and on April 10 it proposed a decree for the disarming of all persons who had been concerned in the Terror. At the same time the reorganisation of the National Guard was undertaken; the lower classes were excluded from its ranks, which were once more filled, as in 1791, with *bourgeois*. The restoration on the same day of the departmental authorities was a further return to the principles of 1791. Next day (April 11) the subordinate survivors of the Girondin party were reinstated.

These various restorations, to which the Convention had been driven to secure itself against the Jacobins, reopened the very serious question of the confiscated property of proscribed persons. By its action in restoring the proscribed, the Convention had acknowledged the injustice of their proscription. Was it to maintain the confiscation of their property—an injustice at least as great? On April 15, on the motion of Johannot, it was decreed to cut out the word "confiscation" from all laws, and to return the property of the victims of the Terror to their surviving relations. But Rewbell, who had entered the Committee of

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Public Safety on April 3, protested in its name against a measure so favourable to Royalists and *émigrés*. The execution of the decree was postponed, and was only passed into law — and that in an amended form — on May 3, when the property of all victims of the guillotine since March 10, 1793, was restored to their families. The only exceptions were *émigrés*, forgers of assignats, and traitorous generals. On April 25 a further measure of justice was meted out to the unfortunate relations of *émigrés*, who had suffered confiscation and been reduced to penury through no faults of their own. A considerable proportion of the property so confiscated was now restored to its rightful owners.

On the same day it was decreed that trade in gold and silver should be freed from the restrictions that had been imposed upon it. This step, which practically reopened the *Bourse*, was highly important, and, considering the starving condition of the Capital and the utter depletion of the Treasury, not very politic: for its immediate result was to depreciate still further the value of the assignats — a gold *louis* was actually sold for 900 *francs* on the 27th, while at Basel assignats fell to 5 per cent. — and to send up prices with a bound.

Such were the measures with which the Moderates sealed their victory of 12 Germinal; but the effect of that victory was also visible in the manner in which they treated the question of the Constitution. "The Constitution of 1793" had been one of the cries during the crisis of Germinal; and on 1 Germinal the Convention had appointed a Constitutional Committee. It was not yet hinted that there was any idea save that of improving upon the dummy Constitution of 1793; it is probable that at first the Committee regarded this as the task before them; but after Germinal the idea of developing the Constitution of 1793 was abandoned; and, when Cambacérès (April 18) reported for the Committee, he recommended the construction of a totally new Constitution. The Committee then resigned and was replaced (April 23) by a Committee of Eleven: — Thibaudeau, Lesage, Larevellière, Boissy d'Anglas, Creuzé-la-Touche, Louvet, Daunou, Berlier, Lanjuinais, Durand-Maillane, and Baudin, of whom only one was an extreme democrat, and three at least, Lanjuinais, Boissy d'Anglas, and Lesage, were favourable to Royalty.

It would seem at first sight that the future at this time looked promising for the government. It had triumphed over its enemies on 12 Germinal, had passed its remedial legislation, had concluded peace with Prussia and with the western rebels, had enlarged and strengthened its Committee of government, rejected the Constitution of 1793, which would have favoured its Jacobin rivals, and appointed a Moderate committee to construct a Constitution after its own political views. Yet, on closer inspection, the triumph will be found more apparent than real. Already it was whispered that Charette and Stofflet were playing false, that the peace in the west had in fact been but a feint to gain time; and even the authors of the Treaty of Basel must

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have perceived that peace with a single Power, with the prospect of continued war with the rest of Europe, would not satisfy the genuine craving for a real and general peace which was everywhere evident. With regard to the war the Committee was in fact on the horns of a dilemma; it dared not face a general peace, which would have involved the return of the armies — an eventuality which was full of danger; and it dared not on the other hand continue to disregard the popular clamour for peace, and the financial situation. Remedial legislation had still further depleted the Treasury, thus increasing social and economic misery. Here was indeed the chief danger which threatened the government. Whether it took the form of Royalism or Jacobinism the discontent was equally dangerous. French public opinion always condemns a government which cannot provide cheap bread. In Paris the allowance became daily smaller, more irregular, and of worse quality; the month of May saw people fainting and even dying of starvation in the streets. Some looked for the remedy to a restoration of the monarchy, others to the re-establishment of the Jacobins; but all malcontents with one voice condemned the existing government.

Besides all this, the Royalist turn which the reaction was taking began to cause the government grave disquietude; and it was not only in Paris that the restoration of Louis XVII was openly talked of. This was a forcible reminder to the Thermidorians that it was possible to carry the campaign against the Jacobins too far. The news therefore that the fiery populace of the south was beginning to take the law into its own hands, and that, on May 5, ninety-seven imprisoned Terrorists had been ruthlessly butchered at Lyons by an infuriated mob, was highly disturbing. It was followed by the intelligence of a further atrocity at Aix, where thirty Terrorists were lynched on May 11. This provoked (May 17) a Jacobin outbreak in Toulon, which was a hotbed of discontent against every government in turn, on account of the number of dockyard men thrown out of work by the ruin of the French navy. Conventional commissioners, with Isnard at their head, were instructed to suppress this revolt; and on the 31st, though only after a stout resistance, the rebellious city surrendered. Meanwhile the "White Terror," as it was called, broke out sporadically, all over the south. Avignon, Arles, and Marseilles, all towns which had suffered unheard-of horrors during the Red Terror, each in turn became the scene of popular retribution; the last of the massacres took place at Marseilles on June 5.

These incidents, occurring at a time when Royalism and not Jacobinism was the danger, put the government in a serious difficulty. On May 1 Marie-Joseph Chénier had made a report, in which he deprecated the Royalist tone of the Provinces; and on May 10 the powers of the Committee of Public Safety were increased. The disarming of Terrorists ceased; and the government, terrified by the spectre of Royalism, suddenly relaxed its persecution of the Jacobins.

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And now all the forces of discontent gathered against the government. In the Convention itself an active minority of ex-Terrorists was at work, under the leadership of Goujon, Romme, Bourbotte, Ruhl, and Ruamps. Round them rallied Royalists, Jacobins, and starving populace, all in fact who desired the downfall of the Convention. For several days it was plain that another "*journée*" was being organised; a programme of insurrection was even circulated in the disaffected quarters of Paris. On 1 Prairial (May 20) the storm broke. The insurrection of this date was in the main a bloody reproduction of that of 12 Germinal. Crowds were gathering in the Carrousel all the morning, and several attempts were made to force an entry into the Convention. About 4 p.m. the rabble broke through the National Guard at the doors, filled the hall, and began to threaten Boissy d'Anglas, who was in the chair. A deputy named Féraud, who intervened to protect him, was slain; and his head, placed on a pike, was held up before Boissy, who calmly bowed to it but remained immovable. The crowd continued for several hours to shout for "bread and the Constitution," during which time many of the Moderate deputies effected their escape. About 9 o'clock, Boissy d'Anglas resigned the chair to Vernier, a feeble old man. The few disaffected deputies then forced through a number of decrees and commenced to establish a provisional government.

Meanwhile the Committee of Public Safety had rallied a number of the *bourgeois* National Guard, and these, headed by some of the Thermidorian deputies, now rushed into the hall. After a prolonged struggle, the arrival of reinforcements enabled them to drive the rabble out of the building. Thirteen *Montagnard* deputies, who had taken conspicuous part in the riot, were forthwith arrested; and by midnight order had been restored.

But the crisis was by no means ended by the clearing of the Convention. Next morning a "Convention of the Sovereign People" began to assemble at the Hôtel de Ville, but soon discreetly withdrew to Saint-Antoine. A renewed attack on the Convention was evidently contemplated. The National Guard hurried off to blockade the insurgents in the faubourg, but 5 p.m. saw them back at the Tuileries, with the rebels at their heels. The Convention, greatly alarmed, endeavoured to conciliate the mob by promises of bread, by ordering its Constitutional Committee to report within four days, and by repealing the laws which had restored confiscated property and reopened the Bourse. A deputation from the rebels was received, caressed by the Assembly, and dismissed with conciliatory promises.

But the leaders of the Convention were playing a double game; all these fair words were intended only to postpone the issue until regular troops could be called in to quell the insurrection. In the midst of the tumult of 1 Prairial the Committee of Public Safety had sent out hurried messages to gather all the nearest available battalions. Three thousand

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cavalry entered Paris on May 22; and by the 23rd General Menou, to whom had been allotted the *rôle* played by Pichegru in Germinal, found himself at the head of 20,000 men. In face of this display of force the rebellious faubourg surrendered at discretion, and the assassin of Féraud was handed over and executed. Apart from this the restoration of order was attended by no bloodshed.

The attempt to repeat May 31 had utterly failed; and sixty-two *Montagnards* were promptly arrested for participation in the plot. Six were condemned to death; even Carnot and Lindet were for a time in danger. In every direction the embers of the Terror were firmly stamped out. The Revolutionary Tribunal was finally abolished; a further concession to religious feeling was made in the restoration of churches to the cults, on condition that the priests declared their obedience to the laws; the National Guard was subjected to a further *épuration*; and a permanent guard of regular troops was appointed to protect the Convention.

Public opinion agreed in these Moderate measures and in the condemnation of the Jacobin rebels; but it was by no means contented that the present government should continue. In the eyes of many the Republic stood condemned of inefficiency; and, with the final fall of the Jacobins, a strong feeling in favour of a restoration of the Monarchy in some form became apparent. For many months this feeling had indeed been on the increase; people talked significantly of the number "17" with allusion to Louis XVII; "*Veux-tu chasser de ton giron Et la famine et la misère? Rétablis le petit mitron Dans la boutique de son père*," ran a contemporary stanza, and it expressed very well the feeling of a large number of Parisians. The idea that famine and misery would end only with the re-establishment of the Monarchy grew every day in strength. Many eyes were thus turned to the Temple, in ignorance of the terrible tragedy that was being enacted within its walls.

The story of the Revolution is moving in many of its incidents; the resigned piety of Louis XVI's end and the superb dignity of his Queen's, the sufferings of Bailly and the passing of Danton, stir us all to sympathy; but nothing in the whole blood-stained tale touches the heart-strings as does the slow and cruel torture to which the Dauphin was subjected for no fault but that of his birth. Separated from his mother on the night of July 3, 1793, he was handed over to the mercy of a friend of Marat — Simon, a cobbler — who received from the *Comité de Sûreté Générale* the assurance that the boy's death would be welcome to them. By this low ruffian Louis was treated with inconceivable brutality; and, by the time that Simon resigned his post in January, 1794, he had succeeded by kicks, blows, and every kind of ill-treatment, in utterly breaking the sensitive spirit of the delicate and tenderly-nurtured child. Robespierre did not provide another guardian in place of Simon; and active maltreatment now gave place

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to absolute neglect — neglect even of the barest necessities of cleanliness and decency. Six months of such confinement of course amounted to murder accompanied by torture; the boy was found by the Thermidorians, dazed and almost witless, covered with sores and vermin, in a pestiferous cell. Respectable and honest keepers were now appointed, who did their best to brighten the child's life and alleviate his sufferings; but, as the Royalist reaction increased, the Thermidorians themselves acquiesced, tacitly but deliberately, in the slow murder which the Terrorists had commenced. Decency and cleanliness and a degree of warmth were granted to the prisoner; but the necessities of air, exercise, and good food were still denied to him. In praising the moderation of the Thermidorian government it should never be forgotten that they share the blame for the most brutal crime of the whole Revolution.

Under these conditions the end was not likely to be long delayed, to the government no doubt the postponement of the child's death was a cause of irritation and alarm. When serious illness was reported in May a doctor was grudgingly granted; but nothing could have been done even had they wished to save the boy's life. The nursing of the dying child was neglected and every consideration and comfort denied; even his sister, confined in the same prison, was not allowed to see him. On June 10 the long sufferings were mercifully ended; the Dauphin passed away, hearing, as he confided to his keeper Lasne, "heavenly music and the voice of his mother."

The government and all Republicans received the news with ill-concealed satisfaction. The murder was justified to them by its far-reaching results. With the death of the Dauphin the claim to the throne passed to the Comte de Provence, who was now wholly identified with the worst phases of the *émigration*. From that moment a peaceful restoration became impossible; the very large and important party of constitutional Royalists, including Lanjuinais, who had recently come to desire a restoration with a constitution on the lines of that of 1791, at once resigned themselves to the continuance of the Republic. The Constitutional Committee, whose tone was so Royalist that it might have reported in favour of a constitutional monarchy, was forced to give up all such ideas and turned itself to the construction of a strong Republican executive.

The sacrifice of the Dauphin had indeed "consecrated the Republic," but it was not to be expected that the Bourbons would give up the struggle without striking a blow; and there was a minority in France which still regarded a restoration on the lines of the Constitution of 1791 as the best solution of the situation. Had Louis XVIII acted on the advice of Mallet du Pan and made a large and generous appeal to the French nation, offering to adopt the principles of 1791, to amnesty all who had taken part in the Revolution, and to recognise the social and economic changes of 1789 and 1790, he might have had some hope of

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success. Instead of this however he united against him all Frenchmen, with the exception of a few ultra-Royalists and the *émigrés*, by announcing that the Constitutionalists were more detestable to him than Robespierre himself. This avowal made it certain that a restoration meant the *ancien régime* and endless retribution; and France had to abandon with reluctance her hope of finding a way out of her miseries by an immediate constitutional restoration.

Quite on a level with this suicidal declaration of policy was the attempt which was made to carry it out. As it was hopeless to rally France to such a cause, the only course was to take advantage of the unrest in the west, to revive the insurrection there, and supply it with aid from without. The peace between the Republic and the rebellious Provinces rested on insecure foundations; the disarmament of the insurgents had proved impossible; and the result was that the *Vendéen* armies still existed, disembodied it is true, but ready to mobilise at a signal from their leaders. The local militia had simply become a small insurgent army under the command of Charette, and was prepared to become at any moment a nucleus for renewed hostilities. The Vendée was thus in fact occupied by the armies of the late combatants, whose attitude to each other became daily more menacing. In Britanny also the peace of La Mabilais had turned out a failure: in both Provinces therefore a renewal of hostilities was momentarily expected. The Royalists now determined to take advantage of these circumstances. Puisaye, who had been sent to England in 1794, had been favourably received and was assured of English assistance.

With a show of scruple, strange in men who had just dealt so cavalierly with the feelings of their countrymen, the Royalist leaders decided that the assistance from Great Britain must be indirect. The actual invaders of France must all be Frenchmen, though they might come in British ships, supplied with British arms and British money. As the preparations were nearing completion, the welcome intelligence arrived that Hoche, who perceived that the western insurgents were actively preparing for a fresh rebellion, had ordered the arrest of as many of their leaders as could be seized.

Encouraged by the news of this breach the expedition set sail from Portsmouth on June 10. A French fleet under Villaret-Joyeuse was defeated on the 22nd; and on the 27th 3600 *émigrés* disembarked near the promontory of Quiberon. Now however the inherent weakness of the expedition showed itself. A dispute arose as to the command between Puisaye and his colleague d'Hervilly; and the latter declined to join in an immediate advance, which was the only chance of raising Britanny. Invaluable time was then wasted in occupying the useless peninsula of Quiberon, which was covered by the fortress of Penthièvre. This was a mere death-trap; and Puisaye and the *Chouans*, a large force of whom had joined the invaders, at last persuaded d'Hervilly to give

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battle. Hoche's skill and resolution combined with the insane tactics of the Royalists to ensure defeat; and on July 19 the luckless expedition found itself shut up on the barren promontory. On July 20 Hoche took the protecting fort by a night attack; 1800 fugitives managed to escape in the boats of the English fleet, and 6000, of whom 1000 were *émigrés*, fell into the hands of the Republicans. The episode ended tragically in a wholesale massacre of the *émigrés* prisoners. Tallien had been sent from Paris to represent the Convention. In his absence the Royalist intrigues in which he had been engaged began to leak out; no better way occurred to him of proving his loyalty to the Republic than the destruction of a few hundred helpless prisoners; he hurried to Paris and advocated this course with strenuous vehemence. The Convention, effete and timorous, was easily persuaded to the bloody deed; and, acting on instructions from Paris, a Court Martial sentenced 690 *émigrés* to death.

The dangers to which the Republic was exposed by the languor of the Convention and the weakness of the governing committee made it daily more important that some settlement should be reached on the question of a constitution. The Constitutional Committee, appointed on April 23, had had no easy task. The material with which it had to deal had been constantly changing; in particular the death of Louis XVII had entirely altered its plans; that event had made monarchy impossible, while the failure of the *émeute* of Prairial had finally sealed the fate of the democratic Constitution of 1793. Consequently the report, which Boissy d'Anglas introduced on June 23, proposed plans for an entirely new Constitution. The principles which had guided the Committee were sane, and the proposals of Boissy d'Anglas went far to solve the really considerable difficulties of the situation. It was necessary to separate completely the legislative and executive bodies; to leave both powerful in their proper spheres, and above all to preserve the executive from undue dependence on the legislative. It was necessary to simplify and recentralise the local government; to give security to property, and to the economic arrangements which the Revolution had established; to curb finally the Paris mob; and to place the government of France in the hands of men who might be presumed to be qualified for the task. Such were the problems which the new Constitution was to solve, and the enumeration of its provisions will show how it went about the task.

Universal suffrage was abolished, and abolished, it should be noted, with scarcely a protest. Residence and the payment of some taxation became the qualification for the franchise; this franchise was to be exercised directly, that is by the Primary Assemblies at first hand. But the greatest blow at democracy was the revival of a property qualification for members of the Legislative Body: in future no one who did not possess house or landed property was to be eligible. The Constitution thus became a *bourgeois* Constitution; and this struck a deadly blow at democracy.

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As to the Legislative Body, the Committee fell back on the long despised bicameral system. There were to be two Councils, the *Conseil des Cinq-Cents* and the *Conseil des Anciens*, forming the *Corps Législatif*; the members of the former body were to be elected by the Primary Assemblies and the *Anciens* were to be elected from and by the entire *Corps Législatif*; the *Cinq-Cents* alone could initiate legislation, and the *Anciens* (who numbered 250) had the power of vetoing any measure for one year. An age qualification of thirty years in the *Cinq-Cents* and forty in the *Anciens* was imposed. The Executive had been the great difficulty; the idea of a single "Consul" had commended itself to those who still hankered after a monarchy, but, after the death of Louis XVII, this plan was given up and it was finally agreed to propose a Directory of five. These five were to be chosen by the *Anciens* from a list of fifty drawn up by the *Cinq-Cents*; they were to control the Ministries and in fact to inherit the powers of the *Comité de Salut Public*. But they were not to sit in the Legislative Body, nor to control the Exchequer; they were forbidden to command troops in person, and were liable to impeachment. One Director was to retire annually.

Such was the body politic proposed by the Committee; but the Constitution went on to lay down a number of Constitutional Principles. In the first place the freedom of the Chambers was secured; voting was to be secret; the place of meeting of the Legislative Body could be changed by the *Anciens* to some other town; the sittings were to be public, but the galleries were not to accommodate spectators numbering more than half the members of either Council, and no processions were allowed to pass through the halls which they occupied. The members were granted also certain safeguards from impeachment; a guard of 1500 men was provided, and troops were not to come within a specified distance of either Council. It will be noted how the disastrous experience of the Legislative and Convention had burnt itself into the minds of the draughtsmen of the new Constitution.

The Committee had next turned to the protection of private rights. The Declaration of the Rights of Man was retained. No differences of rank were recognised, nor any State religion. Freedom of the press, and security of property were guaranteed: labour was to be untrammelled, domiciles inviolable; there were to be no clubs — a blow at the Jacobins — no public sittings of political societies, no armed assemblies. Societies were not to present petitions: the Committee had not forgotten May 31. The return of the *émigrés* was irrevocably forbidden, and the confiscated property of both clergy and *émigrés* finally guaranteed to its purchasers — a blow at the ultra-Royalists. With regard to local government the Departmental Directories were revived at the expense of the Communes; centralisation such as had not existed in France since the abolition of Intendants was to be the order of the day.

The Convention discussed these proposals for seven weeks and did not

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accept them without alteration; for instance, the principle of double election was maintained and a high qualification fixed for secondary electors; passive citizens were accorded a vote if they voluntarily taxed themselves to the extent of the value of three days' work. The property qualification for members of the Legislative Body was suppressed; and the members of the *Anciens* were required by a curious provision to be either married or widowers. *Gradualité*, a plan of Mirabeau's which the Committee had adopted, providing that no one should hold high office without first having held subordinate office, was rejected. The Year XII was selected, in preference to the Committee's suggestion of the Year IX, as the date by which all citizens must qualify for the franchise by ability to read and write and by the exercise of a *métier mécanique*. Finally the duration of the Legislative Body was fixed at three years, one-third of the members retiring every year.

Such was the final plan of the Convention for terminating the Revolution and establishing a settled *régime* in lieu of the provisional government of the Convention. It provoked little enthusiasm and some criticism, and was acceptable to the people, not for any inherent virtues, but as the only means at hand for getting rid of the Convention, whose rule had long since become intolerable. The summoning of the Primary Assemblies held out the hope that — whatever the merits or defects of the Constitution itself — its working would be entrusted to men who, for the first time since 1789, would really represent the people of France. This fact, which to the majority of Frenchmen was the redeeming feature in the Constitution, caused the gravest alarm to the Convention itself. The Republic had so long stifled the voice of popular opinion, monopolised the title of "patriotism," and paraded the rabble minority as the respectable majority, that it is difficult to realise that from first to last, save when true patriotism seemed temporarily to forbid it, the people of France had preserved in a great degree their attachment to monarchical government. We have seen how the hopes of a restoration had been blighted by the death of Louis XVII, and the impolitic attitude of Louis XVIII; but the desire for a monarchical constitution was not dead, and most men believed that the Primary Assemblies would, if allowed to exercise the functions allotted to them by the Constitution, put the working of that Constitution into the hands of men who would ultimately convert it into some form of monarchy. This was a threat not only to the political ambitions, but to the personal security of the Republican majority in the Convention; and all its Republican members at once rallied against the idea of Royalism. The Thermidorians and all regicides joined the ex-Terrorist *Montagnards* in this struggle for self-preservation.

On August 18 Baudin, reporting for the Committee of Eleven, proposed a measure which utterly destroyed the hope that the Primary Assemblies would be allowed a free voice in the forthcoming elections;

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two-thirds of the members of the present Convention were to pass into the new *Corps Législatif*. This was agreed to without protest; and it became a question whether the Convention or the Primary Assemblies should nominate that two-thirds. After long and angry debates it was decided (August 22) that this remnant of the rights accorded by the Constitution should be left to the electors. Further encroachments on the Constitution were also decreed, the age qualification of thirty for the *Cinq-Cents* was relaxed for the benefit of Tallien, and the exclusion of members of the Legislative Body from the Directory for that of Cambacérès. Such were the decrees of 5 and 13 Fructidor.

Never had there been a more barefaced act of usurpation, and loud was the outcry from the disappointed electors. The Constitution was hurriedly submitted to the Primary Assemblies, and sanctioned by 914,000 votes out of 958,000; while the "decrees of the two-thirds" were only accepted by 167,000 out of 263,000, a significant fall in the majority. In the Sections of Paris a great clamour at once arose; and deputation after deputation appeared at the bar with threatening protests. Notwithstanding this the Convention on September 23 proclaimed the Constitution, and fixed October 2 for the nomination of the Electoral Colleges, October 12 for the election of deputies, and November 6 for the meeting of the *Corps Législatif*.

For a well-ordered Royalist policy the agitation which followed these decrees would have been an admirable opportunity. Mallet du Pan declared that Louis could and should have put himself at the head of the Sectional resistance; but he was too deeply involved in fanciful schemes for the restoration of the *ancien régime* and the whole prerogative to understand the significance of the crisis. The latest and most futile of the ultra-Royalist enterprises was an expedition of the Comte d'Artois to the coast of the Vendée. He was at this moment hesitating to disembark and continued hesitating until the end of September, when he landed on the Île d'Yeu; but Hoche's determined preparations frightened him, and in November he withdrew in cowardly fashion to England, leaving Charette and Stofflet, who had gathered considerable forces, to shift for themselves. The Count's desertion was a death-sentence to the two remaining guerilla chiefs. They were captured and executed, Stofflet in January, and Charette in March, cursing the cowardice of their traitorous Prince. With their death the long struggle of the Vendée was concluded.

Quite distinct from the intrigues described above, the genuine agitation in Paris against the Convention was coming to a head. The Primary Assemblies of the Sections of the Capital, which had rejected the decrees of Fructidor with a unanimity marred only by the defection of Section *Quinze-Vingts*, continued to sit in defiance of the law, and, headed by the wealthier central Sections, of which Section Lepelletier was the most prominent, became the centre of agitation. By the morning of 12 Vendémiaire forty-four out of forty-eight Sections were in revolt,

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backed by some 30,000 National Guards. The Convention retaliated by decreeing itself in permanence and despatching General Menou to deal with Section Lepelletier. Menou, however, was determined to avoid bloodshed and contented himself with remonstrances. He was at once removed by the Convention, who appointed Barras and four others to keep order (night of 12–13 Vendémiaire). Barras proposed the arming of a "sacred battalion of patriots"; a crowd of ex-Terrorists were liberated and armed; and, terrified by a measure which threatened to revive the Terror, the respectable Sections now finally determined to resist. Both sides, however, were without plans or organisation. The Sections had their 30,000 National Guards, but were without artillery, and had entrusted the command to General Danican, a man of no energy or capacity. The Convention had its 1500 "patriots" and 4000 regulars, but it lacked artillery. Barras, however, displayed both ingenuity and energy, and was no doubt aided by the genius of Bonaparte, who had just lost his appointment at the War Office and grasped with alacrity the opportunity for distinction which the crisis seemed to offer. He was not, as has often been asserted, second in command to Barras; indeed his position was very ill-defined; but Barras trusted him, and he made great use of him during the insurrection. The fact was at once grasped that the possession of cannon would be a decisive factor; and at midnight Murat was sent galloping off to Les Sablons to secure the forty pieces of the National Guard which were parked there. By 6 a.m. these cannon were in the precincts of the Tuileries; and the organisation of the defence commenced. All the narrow streets which led to the Palace were secured and all the bridges, save the Pont-Neuf which was held by Danican, were guarded.

It was not until the afternoon of 13 Vendémiaire that the Sections began their advance on the Tuileries. For a time it was unchecked; and the assailants occupied the line of the Rue Saint-Honoré. Who began the action is still a matter of doubt; but, fighting once begun, the possession of cannon directed by an expert artillery officer quickly decided the day. The attacks on the approaches to the Tuileries were repulsed by artillery fire, and a few volleys of grape-shot quickly cleared the Rue Saint-Honoré; the attack by the left bank of the river was equally unsuccessful. By 9.30 p.m. the crisis was over. About 100 of the insurgents had been killed. On the 14th the Conventional troops occupied the rebellious quarters.

The usurpation of the Convention was now complete, and had been sealed by force of arms, the best title for all usurpers. It is impossible not to contrast the events of 13 Vendémiaire, An IV, with those of August 10, 1792. Had the defence of the Tuileries, on behalf of the legitimate sovereign, been conducted on that day with a tithe of the determination now displayed on behalf of a usurping body, the Revolution might have been checked and France might have been spared the three terrible years of democratic tyranny.

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The victors of Vendémiaire were wise enough to refrain from all attempt at reprisals on their antagonists. Two of the ringleaders of the Sections were executed, but Menou, though put on trial for his ambiguous conduct, was acquitted. Bonaparte was appointed second in command of the army of the Interior, and, on the resignation of Barras, became its commander-in-chief. But in the Convention itself the result was a fresh upheaval of parties. The Thermidorians began to draw away from their allies of the Gironde, and to join the extreme *Montagnards* in demanding legislation which would curb the Royalist reaction and prevent it from dominating the elections. The Electoral Colleges had already been chosen; and everyone foresaw that, so far as the restrictive decrees of Fructidor permitted, they would nominate Moderates, and even Royalists, at the expense of the Conventionals. Tallien and the self-seekers were furious at the prospect of political extinction and now accordingly allied themselves with the *Montagnards*, intending to use the recent insurrection as an excuse for gagging the electors. It was proposed to quash the primary elections of Paris, to liberate all "patriots," including the "Prairial" prisoners, and confine all *émigrés* and priests. On October 9 there was a fierce quarrel between Tallien and Lanjuinais, with the result that Tallien crossed to the Mountain, and on the 15th denounced Lanjuinais from that side of the Assembly. Tallien had waited before taking this drastic step for the commencement of the secondary elections (October 12), and only took it because the country was nominating Moderates and Royalists. On October 22 he proposed the nomination of a committee of five to advise the Convention as to the steps it should take. The only hope at the moment was that the Convention might be persuaded to quash the elections with a high hand, adjourn the Constitution, perpetuate its own rule, and make this committee its executive: but Tallien's design was unmasked on the 23rd by Thibaudeau, who boldly denounced the attempt to override the Constitution. Thibaudeau carried with him the majority of the Convention; and the Committee of Five was obliged to be content with a renewal of some of the old penalties against *émigrés* and priests (3 Brumaire). The real intentions of the Committee are laid bare by the fact that they also proposed the re-imposition of the *maximum*, which, however, was rejected.

The Moderates had thus been so far successful that the decree for the close of the Convention on October 26 was maintained. During the last stormy weeks many excellent minor measures were passed, dealing with educational, legal, and social questions. The last measure, however, showed once more the attitude of parties; it was a proposal to amnesty all political offenders since 1791. The Right moved to except the offenders of Prairial, the Left those of Vendémiaire, and the latter triumphed. The Convention then dissolved itself (October 26), and on the following day those Conventionals who had been elected to the Councils assembled; on October 30 the candidates for the Directory were nominated; and on November 4 the new government was completed.

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CHAPTER XIV

THE GENERAL WAR

THE death of the Emperor Leopold on March 1, 1792, removed the only hand which was capable of restraining and tempering those outbursts of feeling, both in Austria and France, which had for the last two years threatened to plunge Europe into the vortex of war. The first note of the approaching strife was heard when, in an outburst of enthusiasm, the Constituent Assembly had swept away once and for all throughout all the dominions of the French King the last lingering traces of feudalism. The question at once arose, whether France had the right to deprive the landowners of Alsace of those feudal privileges which she had more or less guaranteed at the Peace of Westphalia, and had confirmed by subsequent treaties. In February, 1790, certain Electors, Princes, Knightly Orders, and Knights of the Holy Roman Empire, who held lands in Alsace, sent a protest to the French government. This protest was referred to the Feudal Committee of the Constituent Assembly. The Committee, under the influence of Merlin of Douai, in October, 1790, brought its report before the Assembly. They asserted that the unity of France and Alsace rested on the unanimous decision of the Alsatians; that ancient treaties and the stipulations of their former rulers could no longer bind a free people. Mirabeau saw that such a declaration could only mean war; and accordingly he persuaded the Assembly to pass a resolution to uphold the sovereignty of France in Alsace, but at the same time to ask the King to arrange that a sufficient indemnity should be paid to the Princes of the Empire in compensation for their losses. This resolution however only postponed the question, for the majority of the Princes refused to accept any monetary compensation and took their cases to the imperial Diet.

But this was not the only cause of friction between France and Austria which arose out of the side-issues of the Revolution. The King and Queen in secret, and the Comte d'Artois and the Prince de Condé openly, had demanded the assistance of the other European Powers to enable them to suppress the Revolution by force. In December, 1791, Leopold had sent a strongly worded protest against the transference of

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the imperial territories in Alsace. He had offered secret aid and an asylum to the French royal family at the time of the flight to Varennes; and further, in July, 1791, he had issued a circular from Padua to the monarchs of Europe, calling on them to aid him in freeing the French King from popular restraint. This circular had led to a conference between the Emperor and the King of Prussia at Pillnitz in August. It was there settled that, since the preservation of the French monarchy was an object of universal interest, an invitation should be sent to the other European Powers, calling on them to aid in restoring the King of France to his rightful position; but at the same time safeguarding the liberties of the French people. To attain this object the two sovereigns promised to mobilise their forces provided the other Powers would aid them. The object of Leopold in issuing this declaration was to intimidate the French people. He knew that the English government would refuse to intervene: that Russia would promise but would not perform: that the Kings of Spain and Prussia and the Stadholder of Holland had all very different objects at heart. He had himself more anxiety for the safety of his sister, and for the maintenance of the French alliance, than for the constitutional position of the King of France. Accordingly, he hailed with joy Louis' acceptance of the new Constitution in September. It was in accordance with this policy that the Emperor, early in January, 1792, at the request of the French King, had used his influence to compel the Electors of Trier and Mainz to disperse the armed bands of *émigrés* who, under d'Artois and Condé, had assembled in those electorates.

But the train fired at Pillnitz was not destined to be thus easily extinguished. So recently as December, 1791, the Emperor's Chancellor Kaunitz had used expressions in a note, which implied that there was still in existence a league against France. And later, on February 17, 1792, Leopold had allowed Kaunitz to send another despatch, which loaded the Girondist leaders of the war party in Paris with abuse, and called on the French nation to free itself from men who desired to plunge Europe into a devastating war. Meanwhile Gustavus III of Sweden was exerting himself to the uttermost at Spa to aid the French *émigrés*; and Catharine of Russia was striving to embroil Austria and Prussia with France, so that she might have her hands free to deal with Poland. In February, 1792, the offensive and defensive alliance concluded between Austria and Prussia perceptibly increased the chances of war.

In France itself there were two parties who desired war. The Royalist party thought that a European war would either have the effect of reinforcing the kingly power at the point of the bayonet, or of restoring the fallen prestige of the monarchy by a successful resistance to the foreigner; while the Girondins, who came into power in March, had already begun to fear the Republican tendencies of the Jacobins, and hoped by a successful foreign war to establish their own authority, and keep the

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strings of government in their own hands. The policy of the Girondins was if possible to isolate the war so that France should only have to fight her old enemy Austria. Events seemed to be tending in this direction, when, in March, 1792, the death of the Emperor Leopold, and the murder of the Swedish monarch Gustavus III, brought Frederick William II of Prussia into a leading position. Frederick William's character was a curious mixture of vacillation and obstinacy, of pride and self-delusion. He was in reality much more interested in the affairs of Poland than in the question of France; but he was thoroughly convinced that the French Revolution was a danger to all crowned heads in Europe, and that, if he allowed Austria to assume the championship of the Empire, the position of Prussia would be forfeited. Accordingly, in spite of the strong French sympathies of an influential party under the leadership of his uncle Prince Henry, he refused to be cajoled by the French government into renouncing his alliance of February, 1792. When, on April 20, the King of France declared war on the King of Hungary and Bohemia, Frederick William at once took measures to support his ally. At that moment nobody thought that Europe was entering on a war which would rage almost without intermission for twenty-three years. France in the opinion of the cabinets of Europe was already a political nonentity; and it seemed even doubtful if she would be able to put an army into the field.

At the commencement of the Revolution, the French army compared not unfavourably in numbers with the two other great standing armies of central Europe. The Austrian army was the largest. It had a peace footing of some 270,000 regular troops, which could be raised to a war footing of 400,000. But Austria had hitherto seldom shown great military aptitude. The Prussian army had a peace footing of 162,658 and a war footing of 250,000: its organisation was believed to be excellent, and it had already established a reputation for quick mobilisation and hard fighting. The French army was slightly larger than the Prussian army. On a peace footing it was composed of 172,974 regular troops, and 55,240 militia; which on the outbreak of war could be augmented to 210,948 regulars and 76,000 militia, or, in round numbers, to a total war strength of 295,000.

During the period which followed the Seven Years' War the French army had undergone many sound reforms which were due in the main to the genius of the great Foreign Minister Choiseul. After Choiseul's fall, Saint-Germain, the War Minister, a disciple of the German school, continued to work on the same lines. Saint-Germain laid great stress on peace manœuvres, and tried moreover to get rid of the old abuse whereby, on the outbreak of war, troops were hastily brigaded, and placed under chiefs whom they had never seen before. This reform was not effected till March, 1788, when the Council of War published an ordinance whereby France, including Corsica, was divided into 17

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military districts. The districts then of most importance, Flanders, the three Bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, and Alsace, were confided to Marshals of France; the other 14 districts were to be commanded by Lieutenant-Generals, with complete powers within their districts. Each Commander-in-chief was responsible within his district for the maintenance of discipline, instruction, and administration in accordance with the King's regulations; he was also responsible for maintaining harmony with the civil power, and for all arrangements for transport and supply of troops within his district. The consequence of this reform was that the French army in 1789 was composed of 21 divisions, each commanded by a Lieutenant-General; these divisions were split up into brigades, so that in the event of war the army would be ready to take the field under the same staff which had trained it in time of peace. The militia was composed of 78 garrison battalions, 14 provincial regiments, and 15 regiments of royal grenadiers. By an ordinance of May, 1778, each garrison battalion was linked to a regular regiment, and a territorial district was allotted to each regiment. The militia battalion, in time of war, was destined for garrison service, and to supply the depôt for its regular regiment.

To turn now to the *personnel* of the army. Up to the Revolution the army had been recruited entirely by voluntary enlistment. Recruiting was not confined to France, and there still remained in the French service 23 regiments of foreigners. Recruits were either attracted by hope of glory, or dazzled by the uniform and bounty, or driven into the service by troubles at home. As might have been expected the type of recruit was often undesirable; they were too often loafers, deserters, or malefactors. The term of enlistment was for eight years; the standard of height was low, 5 feet 1 inch for the infantry. There were however several very serious obstacles to recruiting. The pay was poor (6 *sous* a day); the government bread was bad; the meat often uneatable; barrack accommodation was so scanty that two or three soldiers had to sleep in each bed; the barracks and the hospitals were most insanitary. Although serious attempts were made to improve both the food and the hospital arrangements, it is not to be wondered at that the army lost on an average 20,000 men a year from death and desertion. In spite of these drawbacks there was good fighting material in the royal army. The old soldier might occasionally be dissolute, turbulent, and drunken, but discipline was always easily enforced. There was a strong feeling of *esprit de corps* in the several regiments; and on service the natural vivacity and cheerfulness of their nation carried the French soldiers through all difficulties and dangers. With plenty of intelligence, quick-witted, and hard-working, they could always be relied on to rally or cover a retreat.

The backbone of the army was the non-commissioned officer, grown gray in arms, experienced, and proud of his authority; always capable

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of commanding a section, usually fit to command a company. He understood his men, guided them, and enjoyed their complete confidence. The American War had attracted a superior class to the ranks, with the result that by 1788 it was possible to enforce certain literary and practical tests on all candidates for promotion to the ranks of corporal and of sergeant. The regimental officers were drawn from the lesser nobility, and their fathers and grandfathers had often served before them. Their training commenced when they were 10, and the majority of them had passed through some military college. By 1789 purchase had been abolished. But still there was little incentive to make the officer improve himself. Court favour, influence, and money, were supreme. Thus the officers had no inducement to make themselves efficient, and frequently left everything to their non-commissioned officers. Promotion from the ranks was all but impossible. This grievance had been aggravated when the Comte de Ségur in 1781 passed an ordinance, which excluded all *roturiers* from becoming officers, save in the artillery and engineers. Moreover, colonelcies of regiments, and many of the higher staff appointments, were held by young noblemen and princes who often had little or no knowledge of military science, and whose promotion, even when justified by their knowledge, blocked the way of their less fortunate rivals.

As regards its tactics the French army was quite as advanced as the other armies of the Continent. Guibert by his *Essay on Tactics*, and by proof in the field, had shown that the old system of close column was obsolete. By 1789 the extended order of Frederick the Great had become the drill of the French army. In the infantry and cavalry branches of its service the French army was the equal of the Prussian army, while superior to it in respect of artillery and engineers. The French artillery was the finest in Europe, both as regards numbers, the excellence of its material, and the skill and courage of its *personnel*; while France was the only European Power which paid proper attention to the art of military engineering.

The moment of the outbreak of the Revolution was an unfortunate one for the army. The new system of decentralisation had not had time to take root. The irritation, caused by the introduction of the Prussian military punishments and by the ordinance which forbade *roturiers* from becoming officers, had not yet died away. Further the army was suffering, as all armies must suffer, from the effects of a long spell of peace. Still, the meeting of the States General had at first little effect on the army. The officers took no prominent part in the elections. The private soldier had no vote. However, among the *cahiers* sent up to the Assembly there were many which called for the amelioration of the lot of the soldier. Some demanded better barrack accommodation, more sanitary conditions, better winter clothing, and better food. Others called for better pay, for the privilege of being employed on civil works

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during the period of their military service, and for more scrupulous observance of the terms of service. But the most numerous were those which demanded the abolition of all degrading forms of punishment.

Up to the fall of the Bastille the attitude of the army was doubtful; although owing to the unpopularity of their commander there had already been a mutiny among the *Gardes Françaises*. But after that date it was quite certain that (except the regiments of foreigners) the troops could not be relied upon in the case of riots, as they would not fire on the populace. In all the military districts (save that of the east, where de Bouillé commanded a powerful force of 25,000 men) discipline deteriorated; and by the month of September 16,000 men had deserted their regiments, and enrolled themselves in the National Guards of Paris.

Meanwhile all over France the *bourgeoisie* were organising themselves into National Guards. On paper this force was almost two million strong, though in reality its numbers were considerably less. But at best it was imperfectly equipped and organised. Still, the National Guards aided the regular army in putting down the bands of brigands which swarmed over the country, and helped in the conveyance of supplies of corn, which was the main duty of the army during the winter of 1789, and the first half of 1790.

The march of the women to Versailles and the virtual imprisonment of the King in the Tuileries struck a great blow at the fidelity of the army. The ominous words "Fatherland" and "Liberty" began to be heard in the barracks. Little by little the soldiers began to grasp the new idea that they were no longer the King's soldiers. Hence they came into collision with their officers; for the officers had been educated in the faith that above everything stood the King. The National Assembly regarded the revolutionary spirit of the soldiers with favour; and in June, 1790, it not only refused to sanction the measures by which the Minister of War proposed to put down the numerous mutinies, but decreed that each regiment should send a deputation to the meeting of the Federations in Paris on July 14, 1790. This action, in the opinion of de Bouillé, was the cause of the general insurrection which within a month took place all through the army. The soldiers everywhere demanded that their officers should take the oath of allegiance to the nation. All good order and military discipline were at an end. Even in the corps of de Bouillé, which had hitherto been regarded as most loyal to the King, only the Swiss and the German troops could be relied on. In every regiment there had sprung up committees in communication with the Jacobin members of the Assembly: these committees pretended that the officers had withheld sums of money due to the regiments. Mutinies broke out at Brest, Saarlouis, Metz, Saargemünd, and Marseilles. The two most ominous phenomena in these insurrections, in which they differed from all preceding mutinies, were first that everywhere the soldiers rose under organised committees, and secondly that

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they acted in accordance with instructions sent from the Jacobin Club in Paris.

On August 6, 1790, the Assembly appointed inspectors to enquire into the soldiers' accounts; but in many cases the audit was the signal for fresh mutinous outbursts. This was especially the case at Nancy, where three regiments rose in mutiny; and the mutiny was only put down by de Bouillé and his German and Swiss regiments after three hours' hard fighting (August 31). By 1791 the epoch of suspicion had commenced; and the soldiers were encouraged by Jacobin emissaries to believe that their officers were in communication with the *émigrés*. On June 21, 1791, came the attempted flight of the King to the army of de Bouillé. From that moment the position of the regimental officers became intolerable; humiliations were their daily lot; suspicion and danger hung ever over their heads. They had seen the Princes of the Blood, the higher nobility, and a great number of the higher officers of the army, flying across the frontier. They had hitherto stood fast at their posts because they took their orders only from the King; but now they saw that the King himself desired to leave France. It was clear then that their duty also lay across the frontier; the King, by his actions, had relieved them from their oaths. They were free; the oath taken to the nation was nothing. When convictions such as these had taken possession of them, we cannot greatly blame the officers who now deserted. June 21, 1791, is one of the dates which mark the change of the Royal Army into the Army of the Revolution.

By August it became necessary to take steps to supply the places of those officers who had deserted. The officers who remained either hoped against hope that their troops would stand loyal, or saw in the changes of revolution that opportunity of advancement which had hitherto been denied to them, or were by their patriotism led to stand by the nation rather than by the King. The Assembly now issued a decree that one-half of the new commissions were to be allotted to non-commissioned officers of the regiments in which the vacancies had occurred, and the remainder were to be allotted to the sons of *citoyens actifs*, that is, citizens who had paid sufficient taxes to render them eligible to sit in the Assembly.

A further decree was passed condemning, as deserters, all officers absent without leave since May 1, 1791, and at the same time forbidding soldiers to intimidate their officers into desertion. But this latter decree had little effect. Although in September the King took the oath to the new Constitution, order and confidence were by no means restored in the army. In spite of numerous decrees and of the new Military Code of October, 1791, the later part of the year was marked by increasing insubordination and disorder in the army. War alone could cure these deep-seated evils; and it was during these very months that it began to be clear that war was inevitable. That this war when it came proved to

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be a national and not a civil war was owing to the *émigrés* who, instead of remaining in France and summoning to the aid of the Crown all the latent forces of royalism, had crossed the frontier with the intention of returning at the heels of the Austrians and Prussians.

Since war was within a measurable distance, a decree of the Assembly (December 14, 1791) divided into three armies the troops stationed along that portion of the frontier which was threatened. The Army of the North was entrusted to Rochambeau, the Army of the Centre to Lafayette, both of whom had served in America; while the Army of the Rhine fell to the command of Luckner, an old German hussar. These three armies were the first armies of the Revolution. The soldiers were still those raised by the old Monarchy, but their spirit was already revolutionary. The *personnel* of the officers had undergone profound modification. The majority of the infantry and cavalry officers were gone. The greater part of the old staff of the army had either retired or emigrated, but the artillery and engineer officers remained. New generals and new staffs had been appointed; ambition was to be henceforward the order of the day.

Hitherto the natural method of increasing the army in time of war had been to mobilise and expand the militia; but this was now impossible, because the militia, in the eyes of the children of the Revolution, represented one of the worst abuses of the old *régime*. The National Guards had all along retained their local character, and had never been taken under the control of the central government; nevertheless, aided by the regulars, they had once or twice done some service in maintaining local order. In 1791, when war seemed imminent, the idea took shape of transforming the National Guards into troops for active service. This scheme however met with little favour, especially among the National Guards themselves. Various other schemes for reinforcing the regular army by volunteers were mooted. Under the panic created by the flight of the King, the Assembly passed several decrees; and on August 17 it called for 101,000 volunteers to take up arms, and decided that these volunteers should be formed into 169 battalions. Owing to the fear of invasion the battalions in the north-east filled up rapidly; but over the rest of France many difficulties were met with. In the first moment of enthusiasm men of all ages hastened to enrol themselves; but when the order to march arrived the majority remained at home. By September 25 only 60 out of the 169 battalions had any sort of organisation. Further, even in these 60 battalions the greatest disorder and insubordination reigned; and their march through France was one great plundering expedition.

The War Minister of France at this moment was the Comte de Narbonne. It was mainly owing to his endeavours that France had still any regular army and that the volunteers had any organisation; but in spite of this the Assembly did its best to thwart him at every point. In

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January, 1792, three months before war was declared, Narbonne laid before the Assembly a report, which showed that the army was 51,000 below strength; and that it was impossible to get recruits for the regulars owing to the superior attractions of pay and service in the volunteers. Meanwhile, the Assembly issued two decrees which almost entirely crippled the volunteer organisation. The first decree gave the volunteers liberty to return home at the end of each campaign, on giving their commanding officers two months' notice (a campaign being supposed to end on December 1); and the second decree allowed the volunteers to choose their own officers. The question of officers was a difficult one. The course which good sense would have dictated at this moment was to place the nomination of volunteer officers in the hands of the military authorities, and to brigade the volunteer regiments with regular regiments of the line. But the Assembly refused to take either of these steps. Fortunately for France, Lafayette, who commanded the Army of the Centre, of his own initiative brigaded the volunteers with the regulars. From the success of this experiment the generals commanding the other corps in time followed his example; so that when the crisis came the French army, thanks to its backbone of regular troops, was able to oppose some sort of resistance to the enemy.

Thus, at the commencement of 1792, France was about to enter on a war with an army composed partly of regular soldiers of the old *régime* (whose discipline had been debauched by three years of licensed insubordination, and whose officers were either viewed with suspicion by their men, or, what was fortunately often the case, old non-commissioned officers but yet untried in their new rank) partly of volunteers who had as yet little organisation and less discipline; with a general staff whose *personnel* was constantly changing at each fresh outburst of suspicion; with fortresses long neglected, badly armed, and ill provisioned; with no system of transport and supply; with a War Office which had still all the faults of the old *régime*, its lack of method, its want of responsibility. Meanwhile the Ministers of War succeeded each other in quick succession, Narbonne, de Grave, Servan, Dumouriez, Ladjard, and d'Abancourt, six ministers in six months. Further, the plans, good or bad, of these ephemeral Ministers of War were constantly overridden by an Assembly, in which passion stood for statesmanship, and hypocrisy for patriotism. That France emerged from this strife, reeling it is true, but unsubdued, was due to two causes. First the artillery and engineers, the two scientific corps where long training is everything, had always escaped the faults of the old *régime*, and had consequently suffered little during the last three years; while in the line under the stress of warfare the old soldier recovered to a great extent his accustomed habit of discipline; and the volunteers of 1791, after having been brigaded for some months with regulars, became in time trustworthy troops. But the second cause, and that which really saved France, was that the

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armies of her two great enemies, Prussia and Austria, had fallen far below their old standard, and that owing to their mutual jealousy all the evils of a coalition and of a divided command were to be seen at their worst.

Though war was declared on April 20, 1792, neither side was really prepared for it; mobilisation proceeded but slowly, and active hostilities did not break out till much later. The French preparations were marked by all the blunders which might have been expected, when an inexperienced War Minister like Servan received his instructions from a passionate Assembly which knew still less of the art of war. Instead of attempting to bring the regular regiments and the volunteers up to their full strength, the Assembly contented itself with sanctioning Servan's scheme of calling out 20,000 *fédérés* in July, to form a camp near Paris. In August and September it voted another levy of 42 battalions of volunteers when as yet only 83 battalions of the levy of 1791 came near to being complete. These volunteers of 1792 must not be confused with those of 1791. The volunteers of 1791, bad as they were at first, were composed of a much higher class than those of 1792, and in time formed excellent troops. But the levies of 1792 were composed of fanatics of the lower orders, impregnated with all the doctrines of Jacobinism, and never took any active part in the war.

The Assembly had counted upon opposing 300,000 regulars and volunteers to the invaders. But, after the garrisons had been absorbed, the forces which covered the frontier of France from Dunkirk to Basel on August 10, 1792, amounted to not more than 82,000 men. These forces were divided into three commands. The left, under Lafayette, covering the frontier from Dunkirk to Montmédy, was 43,000 strong. The mass of this army was in three camps on the Flemish border, while a division 19,000 strong lay at Vaux near Sedan. The centre under Luckner, 17,000 strong, watched the roads which led into France by the Moselle. Its front extended from Montmédy to the Vosges, and its headquarters were at Metz. The Army of the Rhine under Biron composed the right wing; its duty was to close the passes near Landau and Bitsch, and the great gap between the Vosges and the Jura, known as the Gate of Burgundy. The Army of the Reserve (composed of the depots of cavalry regiments and infantry battalions and of the untrustworthy volunteers of 1792), was collected at Soissons; it was an unorganised rabble and lacked everything, even arms and clothing, since the government factories had completely broken down. It was indeed fortunate for France that the Army of the Reserve never had to be taken into action; and that the ill-concerted alliance of Austria and Prussia recoiled before accepting any real trial of strength.

On the side of the Allies it had been arranged during the month of February, that, in the event of hostilities breaking out, the Duke of Brunswick should take command of the allied army; and a plan of operations — which was subsequently in the main adopted — was then

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sketched out. In accordance with this plan a Prussian army 42,000 strong had reached Coblenz by the 19th of July. There were also in the neighbourhood of Coblenz 5500 excellent Hessian troops and 4500 *émigrés*; but the *émigrés* were untrustworthy. The Austrian arrangements were being hurried on as fast as was possible, considering their lack of administration. From the Netherlands Clerfayt had arrived with 15,000 men, and Hohenlohe on the Rhine was concentrating 14,000. The total number thus available was some 81,000. There can be no doubt that these forces, if properly handled, should have been sufficient to brush aside any resistance that the French could offer.

But the reason of the failure of the allied army was that there was not sufficient community of interest to overcome the hereditary jealousies of Austria and Prussia. The Allies had but one object in common, and that was to exclude each other from any part of the plunder which they hoped for in Poland. The army suffered from these national jealousies; but it suffered also from the evil of a divided command. The Duke of Brunswick was naturally cautious and circumspect; he was always an admirer of France, and rather favoured liberal thought; moreover, he was growing old and had the caution of old age, and he had also a reputation to maintain. Moreover he had never taken part in great operations, and he had accepted the command against his will, at the desire of the King. His idea was that the Allies should at first content themselves with occupying the chain of fortresses running from Nancy through Metz and Sedan to the Netherlands, and should then try to negotiate with the French. He was convinced that the occupation of this line of fortresses would place France at his mercy. Frederick William II was a man of a very different stamp; he was obstinate, impulsive, and sanguine; he thoroughly believed in the Prussian army; and he was anxious to make a dash at Paris, and thus to relieve the King of France from a false position, and at the same time to increase his own reputation. Accordingly he used all his royal authority to overcome the hesitation of Brunswick.

But even this unfortunate want of unity at headquarters need not have been fatal if the army itself had been sound. The Prussian infantry was recruited either by the forced enlistment of serfs, or by deserters and loafers kidnapped all over Europe. But so strong was the Prussian discipline, and so good were the drill and manœuvre, that the Prussian infantry was at all times formidable, while the Prussian cavalry, owing to its intelligence, its hardness, and its mobility, was the first in Europe. The Prussian regimental officers were thoroughly trained in their work; the majority of them were well educated; all were of noble birth. The defects of the army lay in the other branches of the service. The artillery had even in the Seven Years' War fallen short of the Austrian artillery, and the Prussian engineers had been notoriously inefficient. Neither of these services had moved with the times. Further, the staff of the army was bad; it had suffered from the

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effects of too much routine, too little thought, and too long peace. The medical service was poverty-stricken, the sanitary service did not exist. We must attribute the failure of the organisation to the fact that the training of Frederick had turned out machines, not men. There was no regular system of requisitions; the army consequently was weakened by a long transport train. The Austrian force was, as usual, handicapped by the fact that money and supplies were scarce, and that the generals had to take their orders from Vienna. The *émigrés* were more of a hindrance than an aid; they had little organisation; the ranks of the regiments were full of gentlemen, who were individually brave, but collectively could not be relied on.

Instead of holding the fortresses of Ehrenbreitstein, Düsseldorf, and Wesel, and establishing a solid base on both sides of the Rhine, the Allies practically cut themselves adrift from Germany. The advance commenced on July 30. But they did not push on and take advantage of the initiative, and of the fact that the French could only oppose them by 19,000 troops at Sedan and 17,000 at Metz. The fatal conflict of ideas at headquarters paralysed all movements. The fall of Longwy on August 27, and of Verdun on September 2, opened the way to Paris. But much valuable time had been wasted; while the unseasonable weather, the damp, the insanitary conditions of the camps, and the lack of forethought on the part of the staff, sowed the seeds of disease and demoralisation throughout the army.

While the Allies were taking a month to cover the distance from the Rhine to the Meuse, the result of the Brunswick manifesto was making itself felt over France. On August 10 Louis fled to the Assembly and the mob sacked the Tuileries; while on August 19 Lafayette, the Commander of the Army of the North, found that his conscience would not allow him to serve a country which was going to depose his King. So, after taking all precautions to place his army in the best possible state for resistance to the foe, he crossed the frontier and surrendered himself a prisoner to the Austrians. The same day Dumouriez, who was in command of a corps of the Army of the North at Maulde, received his nomination as Commander-in-chief of the Army of the North in Lafayette's place. The Army of the Centre also underwent a change of command. Luckner had all through August taken no steps to check the invader. It was his fault that Longwy and Verdun were so ill-armed, ill-garrisoned, and ill-supplied that they were unable to hold out. On August 25 Servan, the War Minister, recalled Luckner and placed Kellermann, a brave soldier, but no strategist, at the head of the Army of the Centre.

Dumouriez, the new Commander of the Army of the North, had served in all grades of the service, and in most countries of Europe. He was the typical political and military adventurer; energetic, quick-witted, and optimistic. He grasped the fact that if the monarchy was

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to be saved the Allies must be checked at once. As Minister he had attempted to detach Prussia from the Austrian alliance. He now thought that the best way to break up the alliance and to check the advance was for the French to make a counter-stroke in the Netherlands. He hoped that, with his army on their right flank ready to threaten their rear, and Kellermann at Metz on their left flank threatening their communications, the Allies would be forced to halt. But on receiving the news of the investment of Verdun Dumouriez at Sedan saw that there was not now time for his offensive plan to succeed. He decided, therefore, to occupy the forest of Argonne, a belt of hilly, wooded country, forty miles long by seven broad, which lies between the Aisne and the Aire. In those days, owing to the dense undergrowth, it was only penetrable at certain spots. By closing the main road between Clermont and St Menehould he would force the Prussians to go round by more circuitous routes, such as the pass at Grand Pré, or the clearing at Croix-aux-Bois. The Prussians committed the fatal mistake of failing to occupy the main Paris road, and also of neglecting to attack Dumouriez as he marched across their front on September 1 and 2. By September 3 Dumouriez held the Argonne, and Kellermann was marching up from Metz to reinforce him. The Allies accordingly had to turn Dumouriez' position. This they effected on September 14 by way of Croix-aux-Bois. On the morning of the 15th Dumouriez fell back south, in great disorder, and took up a position facing north at St Menehould, where after some hesitation Kellermann joined him on the 19th. If the Prussians had broken up their camp at Landres at once, and kept up contact with Dumouriez, they could have completely defeated him before he effected his junction with Kellermann. But they remained at Landres till the 18th, and it was not till the evening of the 19th that they came into contact with the French left.

On September 20 was fought the battle of Valmy. The French occupied a position on a ridge of hills with their backs to Germany; the Prussians attacked them with their backs to France. The Prussians gained some slight success early in the day; but the French artillery on the heights of Valmy and Mont Yvron was so well handled that the Prussian batteries could never silence it. Consequently Brunswick, seeing how heavily his columns suffered when they came within range of the French guns, refused to allow the attack to proceed. The Prussians had 34,000 engaged and lost 184 killed and wounded; the combined armies of Kellermann and Dumouriez were 52,000 strong, but of this number probably only 36,000 were actually opposed to the Prussians, since Dumouriez had to keep sufficient troops in hand in case the Austrians and *émigrés* made a serious effort to force the pass of Les Islettes in his rear. The French loss was 700 killed and wounded. In view of the demoralisation of the Prussians on the evening of the 20th we cannot blame Brunswick for refusing to make a frontal attack on Valmy, when

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the Prussian artillery was unable to silence the French guns, and when such an attack would have exposed his columns to a severe enfilading fire from the guns of Mont Yvron. The result of the battle was that the Prussians, though demoralised, lay across the direct road which led to the French reserves at Châlons. Consequently, on the evening of the 20th Dumouriez ordered Kellermann to fall back. By the morning of the 21st the combined French force had taken up a strong position, extending from St Menehould to Dampierre-sur-Auve, whereby Dumouriez threatened the Prussian left should they advance directly on Châlons, and at the same time covered the route to Châlons by Vitry-le-François, and thus once again picked up communication with his base.

Valmy taught the world that France was still a nation, and that the French army was still a force to be reckoned with. Whether the French troops would really have stood if the Prussians had charged home is hard to say. But once again we must emphasise the fact that at Valmy it was not the revolutionary troops, but the old royal army which won the day. The artillery which bore the brunt of the fight was the artillery of 1789, and Kellermann's infantry, which stood firm round Valmy, was (save for two battalions of the volunteers of 1791) composed of regular regiments of the old Army of the North.

After September 20 there followed a pause. The Prussians were greatly disheartened by their ill-success; their organisation and discipline were daily getting worse, and their ranks were greatly thinned by disease. On the other hand, the French troops were elated by their stand against the famous Prussian army; and two large camps of volunteers were forming, one at Châlons, the other at Auberive on the Suippe. Still the French troops could not be trusted to assume the offensive. Both sides therefore were glad to negotiate. Dumouriez was quick to see the growing friction between Austria and Prussia over the question of Ansbach and Baireuth, and over the scheme of indemnifying Austria at the expense of France. He pointed out to the King of Prussia that the lowering of the prestige of Austria was of vital importance to all the Powers of Europe. But greatly as he appreciated this argument, the King of Prussia, the defender of the Divine Right of Kings, felt himself in honour bound to plead for his friend the King of France; he therefore demanded that Louis should be re-established in the position held by him prior to the outbreak of August 10. On this point Dumouriez could but temporise, for he had been informed that the Convention on September 21 had declared France a Republic. Meanwhile the French commander had no easy task to perform. His strategic position was hardly sound; the Prussians blocked his main line of retreat on Paris; and, in addition to the strategic question, he had to face the arrogant jealousy of Kellermann and the suspicion of the soldiers, who failed to understand the intricacies of a waiting game.

But nevertheless day by day the French position was getting stronger.

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Servan, the energetic War Minister, backed by the strong will of the imperious Danton, was doing good service, till on September 25 the anarchy in Paris forced him to resign. He was succeeded by the incompetent self-seeking Pache, but not before he had placed enough material and men at the disposal of the generals in the field to have enabled them, if it had been necessary, to have seriously impeded, if not to have stopped any further advance of the Allies. Dumouriez himself took energetic measures; he ordered the country on the direct road to Paris to be devastated, the women and children to be sent behind the Marne, and the men formed into guerilla bands. The streams of volunteers which flowed into his camp from Châlons were tested, and if found lacking in discipline and equipment were promptly sent back. Every effort was made to induce the Prussian troops to desert. Yet as the days passed the French army round St Menehould became despondent; food and supplies of all sorts were scarce, and the fact that the Prussians were worse off hardly alleviated the pangs of hunger. Affairs seemed grave indeed when on September 29 the armistice ended; but on the 30th the Prussians started fresh negotiations. They had hitherto been duped by Dumouriez; it was now their turn to take their revenge.

The French negotiators were Westermann and Benoît, commissioners from the Convention, but deeply impregnated with the views of Dumouriez. The Prussian envoys were Lucchesini and Kalkreuth. They had been sent, mainly at the desire of Brunswick, with a view to temporising while he withdrew the allied army from a very critical position. Disease had reduced the Allies to 17,000 effectives; it had become absolutely necessary to retreat. The only possible line of retreat was the way by which they had advanced, and this was only practicable if they could traverse the Aisne, and the defiles of the Argonne, without being pressed by the French. The retreat commenced on September 30, and on October 7 the Allies had crossed the Meuse at Vilosnes. The weather throughout had been terrible, but fortunately the French had remained inactive. The commissioners and Dumouriez had great hopes of detaching Prussia from the Austrian alliance, and had secretly promised not to attack the Prussians till they reached Verdun. It was not till October 5 that Kellermann was allowed to take up the pursuit with 25,000 men, while Dillon was told to press on through Les Islettes after Hohenlohe-Kirchberg's Austrians. Brunswick had originally intended to hold the line of the Meuse, but on October 8 he heard that a column from the French Army of the Rhine had reached Speier and was threatening his retreat. Accordingly he was glad to enter into negotiations with Kellermann, whereby operations were virtually suspended. On October 14 the Prussians evacuated Verdun, and on the 22nd Longwy, and recrossed the frontier with 10,000 effectives, and 20,000 sick out of the force of 42,000 which had entered France two months before.

Dumouriez has been very severely criticised for his share in these

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operations. Military opinion under the influence of Jomini holds that he ought to have attacked the Prussians during their retreat in the defiles of the Argonne; that he could easily have annihilated them, owing to the number of the sick and their lack of *moral*, and that such a blow would have automatically cleared the Austrians out of the Netherlands and ended the war. But we must remember that Dumouriez never really grasped the terrible condition of the Prussian army; that his own force could scarcely be relied on; and that his one desire was to clear France of the invaders and to do so without risking the prestige of his raw and ill-disciplined army. Moreover Dumouriez' negotiations undoubtedly led up to the final dissolution of the Austro-Prussian alliance at the Treaty of Basel in February, 1795.

At the commencement of August, 1792, the Army of the Rhine was composed of about 24,000 men, of whom two-thirds were volunteers. It was holding a long line from opposite Basel to Landau, where it picked up connexion with the outposts of the Army of the Centre. The commander-in-chief was Biron, an old soldier, with plenty of military experience and of tried courage, but fatally lacking in determination. In this quarter there was no immediate danger. The small German States remained neutral. In the towns the doctrine of the Rights of Man was regarded as the advent of the Millennium; but in the country districts it was not understood. The only States which were really hostile to the French were the ecclesiastical principalities of Cologne, Trier, and Mainz; but these States were not formidable. Still Biron had a very hard task to perform. As little danger was expected, his command was neglected: the fortresses were on the whole well equipped, but otherwise his army was starved, and merely regarded as a training school for the volunteers. His staff, always miserably small, was constantly being reduced and changed by calls made upon it by the Armies of the Centre and the North. When Kellermann was hastily summoned to take command of Luckner's corps at Metz, Lieutenant-General Custine became Biron's chief adviser. Custine had seen service in America; he was convinced that he was a sort of Admirable Crichton, financier, orator, diplomat, and general, while in fact he was only a dashing cavalry officer with an excellent physique and an extraordinary appetite for work. On September 19 he was given command of a new corps called the Army of the Vosges, formed out of the divisions which were encamped round Weissenburg.

The object of this redistribution was to enable the French to make a diversion in Brunswick's rear. Dumouriez strongly advocated an attempt to cut the Prussian communications at Verdun; but Biron settled that Custine should make a raid on Speier, which was practically the base of the Austrian forces, and only 18 miles from the French fortress of Landau. On September 30, with practically no opposition, Custine took Speier, and on October 5 detachments of his army occupied

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Worms and secured the crossing of the Rhine by seizing Philippsburg. The consternation in Germany was widespread. Baden, Mainz, and Hesse-Darmstadt were in convulsions of terror, and the Empire resolved to call out its troops. Even Custine's hasty evacuation of Speier and Worms on October 10, on the reported approach of an Austrian column, did not undeceive the Germans. On October 12 Custine heard for the first time of the check of the Prussians in the Argonne. He at once reoccupied Speier and Worms. He had already learned that the important fortress of Mainz was ill-defended, and that there were divisions among the inhabitants: and a strong French party in the town composed of philosophers and so-called Liberals had made overtures to him. Accordingly he appeared before the fortress on October 19, and had the satisfaction of receiving its surrender on the 21st. If he had been a wise man Custine would now have pushed on down the Rhine, seized Coblenz, and seriously menaced the retreating Prussians. But he had conceived the idea of invading Germany, although he had only had 18,000 men with him at Mainz. Frankfort capitulated to a small column under Houchard, and the French success seemed complete. But, in spite of the acclamations of certain sections of the people, the mass of the Germans had but little love for the new French ideas; while Custine's heavy exactions, which had the one merit that they fell on rich and poor alike, soon caused the French to be loathed throughout the captured districts. The Army of the Rhine did much to disillusion the Germans of those grandiose ideas of French liberty and the Rights of Man which the admirers of the Revolution had striven to inculcate.

Meanwhile on October 24 the Prussians heard at Luxemburg of the fall of Mainz. Accordingly Brunswick at once ordered the army to fall back to secure its retreat. On the 25th the advanced guard reached Coblenz; once there, the Prussians were fairly secure. Good strategy now demanded that, after making sure of the bridge-heads at Coblenz and Ehrenbreitstein, the Prussians should have moved up the left bank of the Rhine and threatened Custine's position by occupying Bingen. But disease had so shattered his forces that Brunswick was forced to cross the river at Coblenz, and put his army into hospital at Montabaur. By the middle of November the Allies were once again ready to take the field; and Custine, who had been reinforced by 15,000 men drawn from the garrisons of Alsace, was at last given an opportunity of showing his generalship. The French commander was very short of cavalry; his troops were mainly composed of volunteers; he had also to find garrisons for Mainz, Frankfort, Worms, Oppenheim, Bingen, and Kreuznach. He ought accordingly to have evacuated the right bank of the Rhine; instead of which he took up a defensive position behind the Nidda. This position did not really cover Frankfort, and the Prussians had simply to march round his flank to seize the town, which was weakly garrisoned and surrendered on December 2. Custine thereon fell back on Mainz.

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On January 1, 1793, new life was given to the French army by the arrival of three commissioners from the Convention, Rewbell, Merlin of Thionville, and Haussmann. The Army of the Rhine was now 45,000 strong, composed of 22,000 troops concentrated at Mainz, and 23,000 divided along a line, Oppenheim—Speier—Kreuznach. Meanwhile the Allies were also greatly encouraged; Coburg was making his presence felt in the Netherlands; and a French expedition under Beurnonville had been repulsed near Trier on December 17 by a small force of Austrians. But, instead of occupying Bingen and thus threatening the French retreat, Brunswick determined to try to envelope Custine. Kalkreuth was to work round by the Moselle, and Wurmser was to operate from Mannheim. It was not till March 21 that the Prussians actually made themselves felt on the French left, and crossed the Rhine at Bacharach, while on March 26 the French right was also defeated. Custine thereon determined to fall back. After burning his stores he evacuated Worms and Speier, and arrived at Landau on April 1. The attempted invasion of the Electorates had undoubtedly proved a failure; and Custine's system of requisitions had entirely shattered the growing French party among the Rhine States.

During the Valmy campaign the French force watching the frontier in the Low Countries had been reduced to some 9000 men. But the Austrians under the Duke of Saxe-Teschen failed in their only venture, the siege of Lille. On October 5 Dumouriez handed over the pursuit of the Prussians to Kellermann, and proceeded to Paris to renew his arrangements for the invasion of the Austrian Netherlands, which he had been compelled to abandon at the commencement of September. Both Dumouriez and the Ministers of the Convention were of opinion that Prussia was on the eve of abandoning Austria, and they thought that the seizure of the Netherlands would be received with enthusiasm by France as the completion of the old ideal of the "natural boundaries." The Provinces themselves seemed to desire nothing better than the substitution of French for Austrian rule. In all the Provinces there was a bitter anti-Austrian party which owed its origin to the ill-directed attempts of Joseph II to centralise and unify his dominions. This party was twofold. One section, the Statists, led by van der Noot, desired to retain the Catholic religion and all the ancient liberties and anomalies of the various Provinces: the other section, the Republican party, called Vonckists, was full of enthusiasm for the ideas of the Rights of Man, and above all things desired a revolution on the lines of that of France. The French Government was quite aware of the strong anti-Austrian feeling in the Netherlands, but it did not grasp the fact that above all things, above liberty, glory, and the rights of man, the people of these Provinces loved their old institutions.

On October 12 Dumouriez, who for the moment had captivated the Jacobin party and was strong in the support of Danton, carried the

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Assembly with him in his plans for the invasion of Belgium. Four columns were ordered to proceed to the Belgium frontier. The centre or main column — Dumouriez' Army of the Argonne — was to concentrate at Valenciennes; its duty was to seize Mons. Meanwhile a column on the right under Valence — known as the Army of the Ardennes — based on Givet, was, with the aid of a column under d'Harville from Maubeuge, to distract attention by moving on Namur. The fourth column, on the left, under Labourdonnaye, composed of volunteers from the camp of Châlons, was to feint northwards and if possible seize Tournai, Courtrai, and Ghent. To oppose these four corps, the Austrians under Saxe-Teschen numbered in all 25,000. But individually the Austrian troops were superior to the French, and they had a great advantage in their magnificent cavalry. The French forces were largely composed of volunteers, who had more zeal than experience; but, worst of all, the French Commissariat and Ordnance Department completely broke down. This was the fault of the new War Minister, Pache. Pache was a good subaltern, a hard worker, but a man of mediocre ability and extremely greedy of power, and he desired to turn the War Office into a Jacobin Committee. He hated Dumouriez, and dismissed everybody who was known as one of Dumouriez' men. On November 5 Pache instituted a new board known as the *Directoire des Achats*, composed of the Ministers of War, the Navy, and the Interior; this board was to have sole control of purchasing supplies of all sorts. When it came into operation on January 1, 1793, it inaugurated its rule by a series of frauds and monopolies which exceeded anything heard of under the old *régime*. Meanwhile, the Commissariat Department was thrown completely out of gear; for Pache dismissed from his post as Commissary-General Doumerc, who had performed wonders in the way of organisation and forwarding of supplies during the Valmy campaign. Later in November he arrested Malus, Dumouriez' commissariat Staff-officer.

Thus handicapped, Dumouriez started his campaign by issuing proclamations to the Belgians, narrating the oppression of the Austrians and the good intentions of the French. Estimating his troops at their true worth, he saw that his only chance was to avoid a war of sieges and to trust to a rapid forward movement. Accordingly he advanced against Saxe-Teschen, who had weakened his force by attempting to hold the line of Namur — Charleroi — Mons — Menin. The Austrians, 13,200 strong, occupied a strong position on the hills near Jemappes, and thus covered Mons from the north. Dumouriez, reinforced by d'Harville, determined to force the Austrians from this position on November 6. His plan was to make an attack all along the line, but especially to attempt to pierce the Austrian left between Jemappes and Cuesmes. D'Harville was to act with a detached force on the extreme right, and to try and push round Mons and thus to intercept the Austrian retreat. There was great unsteadiness in all the French columns; and the success

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of the attack was mainly due to the fact that the right column near Cuesmes found some boats and was thus enabled to cross the Trouille and appear on the Austrian rear. Up to this time the Austrians had fought well and their cavalry had been used with great effect, but now they hurriedly evacuated their position. The Austrian commander did not attempt to hold Mons, but fell back on Brussels. The retreat was not interfered with, as d'Harville lacked nerve, while Dumouriez' force was too tired and disorganised to take up the pursuit. The Austrians in this battle lost 4000 killed, wounded, and deserters, out of a total of 13,200. The French success was entirely due to their overwhelming numbers and the energy and courage displayed by Dumouriez, Thouvenot, the Duc de Chartres, and other general officers. The old battalions of the regular army fought well, and three battalions of volunteers of 1791 showed considerable pluck and pertinacity. The artillery, which outweighed the Austrian by 100 guns to 50, was used with great dexterity; but the volunteers again and again refused to advance to the attack, and, when they had been induced to do so, broke at the first sign of resistance.

The victory of Jemappes dazzled the whole French nation; the shortcomings of the volunteers, Dumouriez' mistakes in strategy and tactics, all were forgotten in the outburst of enthusiasm which greeted the first real victory of the Republican arms in the field. Europe also was thunderstruck by the amazing vitality of France. In the Netherlands the immediate effects of the battle were far-reaching. Mons threw open its gates to Dumouriez on November 7. On November 8 the Austrian government hurriedly fled from Brussels, and Saxe-Teschen with the main Austrian force fell back towards Liége. On the 14th Dumouriez entered Brussels, where the French were enthusiastically received. The pursuit was vigorously continued; and by November 28 the Austrians had evacuated the Netherlands, and the French held Liége. Meanwhile Dumouriez had despatched columns in all directions. Ypres, Furnes, Nieuport, and Bruges, surrendered to one column; Tournai, Ghent, and Antwerp, to another; Charleroi and Namur to a third. Dumouriez has been blamed for not concentrating his forces and attempting to surround and annihilate the main Austrian army under Clerfayt; but his reason was that he had no supplies. Pache had upset all his commissariat arrangements. By December 13 Dumouriez' advance guard had reached Cleves; but Beurnonville, on December 24, was repulsed in his operations along the Moselle; and Custine at the end of December was falling back before the Prussians. It was time therefore for Dumouriez' army to halt, for it was in a very bad way. The commissariat practically did not exist; but, worst of all, the defects of the volunteer regulations of 1791 were being felt to the full, and the army in the Netherlands, which at the end of October had numbered some 100,000, was at the end of December reduced to 45,000.

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In Belgium itself trouble was now brewing. The people of the Netherlands had been delighted to be freed from the Austrians; but they had no love of republican institutions, and they desired their old provincial administration. Moreover, the French soldiers were showing their hereditary plundering instincts and their lack of discipline; while the heavy and unexpected exactions, which had to be enforced owing to the failure of the commissariat, increased the friction between the civilian population and the army. But the finishing touch came from Paris, where the Assembly on December 15, at the instigation of Cambon, passed a decree that in all territories occupied by French troops the new French Revolutionary institutions should be established. The Belgian people were furious when they understood the effect of this decree. The result was that Statist delegates were everywhere elected for the Convention which was to settle the government of the country. But the French paid no heed to the desires of the people. On January 26, 1793, Danton incorporated the Belgian troops in the French army; and after January 31 the only government in the country was that of the French generals, assisted by national Commissioners from Paris, who proceeded to use the army to force the Belgians to vote for incorporation.

Such was the state of affairs in Belgium when on February 1 France declared war on England and Holland, and followed it up in March by hurling her ultimatum at Spain. The propagandist decrees had entirely altered the aspect of European politics, and the war against France now became a matter of principle. Every government in Europe was directly threatened; no crown for the future was safe. Moreover, the execution of Louis on January 21 added to the general alarm. England saw her naval position threatened by the occupation of Antwerp and the opening of the Scheldt; while the Dutch Republic knew that the French government, so early as December, 1792, had meditated an invasion of her territories. To meet the situation, the Committee of General Defence decided that the French forces on the frontier were to be grouped as follows. The Army of Belgium, 62,000 strong, was to be directed against Holland and Cleves; the Army of the Moselle, 62,000, was to lay siege to Coblenz; the Army of the Rhine, 62,000, was to commence operations in Swabia; while a reserve of 25,000 was to be concentrated at Châlons. The total armed force of France was to be 502,800 men, of whom 53,000 were cavalry and 20,000 artillery. Meanwhile, during January, the War Office was reorganised. This reorganisation had the advantage of increasing the responsibility of the heads of the departments, and at the same time of giving the War Minister expert advisers, while leaving him responsible for the whole of the administration. But it tended to increase friction between departments and to add to departmental jealousies.

Dumouriez' original plan for the invasion of Holland was that he

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himself should take Maestricht, while Miranda laid siege to Venloo; and that the two armies should then concentrate and march on Nymegen, the key of Holland. But the Prussians were too quick for him, and on February 9 they managed to throw a body of troops into Maestricht. Dumouriez therefore determined that Miranda should lay siege to Maestricht, while he himself, masking the fortresses west of the Rhine, should cross the sea at Mondyck and land at Dordrecht, and thus turn all the eastern defences of Holland and push straight on to Amsterdam before the Dutch had time to mobilise. The arrangements of this campaign were considerably facilitated by the fact that once again he had Malus as Commissary-General-in-Chief in Belgium, while men of his own training like Thouvenot were on his staff. On February 16 the expeditionary force, composed of 1000 cavalry, 15,000 infantry (all but three battalions being volunteers), and 40 guns, crossed the frontier. On February 26 Breda capitulated, and on March 1 Gertruydenberg.

On the whole the Netherlanders south of the Rhine were glad to receive the French. But on March 2 disasters began. Miranda, who with 23,000 men was still lying before Maestricht, heard that the Austrians had crossed the Roer and were pressing forward. Austria had now a new directing hand, as Count Philip Cobenzl had been succeeded as foreign Minister by Thugut. Thugut's hostility to France had begun when he was Minister at Constantinople; and it was increased by his horror at recent events. The allied generals held a conference at Frankfort early in February, 1793, when it was decided that the new Austrian Commander, Prince Frederick of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, should at once proceed with 40,000 men to the relief of Maestricht. After relieving Maestricht, he was to send a large detachment to aid Brunswick who was to besiege Mainz; while Wurmser with another Austrian army should cross the Rhine between Basel and Mannheim, and Hohenlohe-Kirchberg should guard Trier and Luxemburg. On March 1 Coburg, with 40,000 Austrians, crossed the Roer, and surprised the French advanced guard which was scattered in cantonments behind that river. The French army had no horses for its transport; clothing and supplies were deficient; and most of the corps were full of raw recruits. In the first action on March 1 the French lost 16 guns, 300 prisoners, and 2000 killed and wounded, while the Austrians' loss was some 40. This was entirely due to the good handling of the Austrian cavalry, and it had the effect of greatly dispiriting the raw French levies. On March 3 Miranda raised the siege of Maestricht and retreated by the roads leading to Diest and Louvain. On March 5 he effected a junction with Valence at Saint-Trond; and took up a defensive position. His right was at Malines, his centre at Louvain, and his left behind the Dyle.

Coburg should have pushed on at once and taken advantage of the evident demoralisation of the enemy. His inaction gave the French a chance. On March 8 the Convention declared the country in danger

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and called for fresh volunteers, and at the same time recalled Dumouriez from Holland. Dumouriez left his expeditionary force under du Flers in Holland, hoping, after he himself had defeated the Austrians, to return and carry out his plan of invasion. But, when Dumouriez left, the expeditionary force quickly became demoralised. Meanwhile Holland was arming and England preparing to ship troops and guns. Consequently on March 15 du Flers fell back behind the Scheldt.

The state of affairs in Belgium came as a complete surprise to Dumouriez; the French army was disorganised and panic-stricken, and the population of Belgium on the verge of revolt. On his arrival at Brussels on March 10 Dumouriez at once issued three proclamations which greatly restored public confidence. First he passed a severe censure on the national Commissioners; then he invited the magistrates to lay their complaints before him; and lastly he dissolved all the Jacobin clubs. He then proceeded on March 11 to Louvain; and, after taking up his command there, he wrote on March 12 his famous letter to the Convention, justifying his conduct by pointing out that the situation in Belgium arose owing to the avarice and injustice of the national Commissioners. Meanwhile the soldiers were delighted at the return of their old chief. Dumouriez set to work to restore discipline. His first object was to send away from his camp those battalions which were completely untrustworthy. He then proceeded to call up the best battalions from Brussels to take their place. Dumouriez had no idea of assuming a passive defence; he decided to take the initiative. He thought that the country, intersected as it was by streams and ditches, was not favourable to the Austrian cavalry; and he knew that at the moment Coburg had weakened himself by sending detachments to Beaulieu at Luxemburg and Hohenlohe-Kirchberg at Trier. Moreover he hoped to fight a successful engagement before the Dutch and Hanoverian troops could cross to the assistance of their allies. But Coburg had awakened to the fact that Dumouriez was doing wonders, and that France was making desperate efforts to reinforce him. He also decided to take the initiative and not to await his allies. On March 16 the Austrians attempted to get round the French right at Tirlemont, but were driven back. Dumouriez spent the 17th in reconnoitring. The Austrians who had withdrawn to the right bank of the Little Geete occupied the line of hills running from Racour to Leau.

Dumouriez' plan was to use his left as a pivot and swing round his whole line on the Austrian left. The battle commenced at 7 a.m. on the morning of March 18. The Austrians were at first surprised by the French right. But unfortunately for the French their right did not extend far enough to outflank the Austrians posted in Landen; hence the French right attack developed into a frontal attack on Overwinden which lasted all day. At nightfall the Austrians under Clerfayt had only just succeeded in driving the French back. In the centre Neerwinden

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was taken and lost and taken again; but the French could not make good their hold on it, since it was commanded by Coburg's batteries on the hill above. When night fell, Neerwinden was still in the hands of the Austrians. The French right and centre had consequently received a severe check; but on the left matters had gone still worse. At first the French made good the crossing; but the Austrians, by a series of successful cavalry charges, sent the volunteers flying. By nightfall the whole of the French left was in flight behind the Little Geete. On the morning of the 19th panic had begun to spread; so on that evening Dumouriez fell back on Cumptich. Coburg, who had only lost 3000 in the action, did not pursue Dumouriez, and once again threw away a golden opportunity.

Though the loss of the battle of Neerwinden was due in a great part to Miranda and the volunteers, Dumouriez also made glaring mistakes. He had failed to concentrate his forces properly; he had not called in d'Harville from Namur, or the Army of Holland; and he had thus thrown away the opportunity of collecting 70,000 troops and providing himself with a force nearly double that of his enemy. On March 23 negotiations were opened between Coburg and Dumouriez, and an agreement was made whereby Coburg, who had not grasped the utter demoralisation of the French, promised not to attack: while the French on their side agreed to evacuate Brussels, which they did on March 24, to the great delight of the populace.

So early as March 12 Dumouriez had notified his discontent to the Convention. His hatred of the Republic dated back to his quarrels with Pache, Cambon, Marat, and the Commissioners in Belgium. At one moment he had dreamed of restoring the Bourbons after a successful campaign against Austria; later he had hoped to conquer Belgium and Holland and mould them into a Republic, of which he should be dictator, and with whose armies he might return and restore the monarchy. He now saw that his defeat at Neerwinden meant the certain victory of his enemies, the Jacobins; and he determined now to make an arrangement with the Austrians whereby he might, either by their aid or without it, declare war on the Jacobins of Paris. Meanwhile, on March 25, Mack arrived from the Austrian headquarters. It was arranged, firstly, that the French troops should be allowed peaceably to evacuate Holland; and secondly, that Dumouriez should withdraw all French troops across the frontier of the Netherlands by March 30. Accordingly on March 31 the French troops were all on their own side of the frontier. There was great excitement at Paris. Immediately after Neerwinden the *Comité de Défense Générale* had been reconstructed and its membership increased to twenty-five. Every day brought fresh news of Dumouriez' intrigues with the Austrians. Hence on March 30 the Committee determined to despatch a commission of five, together with Beurnonville, the War Minister, to proceed to the front and make enquiries on the

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spot. When this commission arrived at St-Amand late on the evening of April 1 Dumouriez promptly handed the members over to the Austrian outposts. He spent the next four days in attempting to get the whole army to join him and go over to the Austrians, and also in making arrangements to surrender Douai. Such was his popularity with the old soldiers of Valmy and Jemappes that the mass of the regular infantry and cavalry were ready to obey his orders. The artillery, however, and the volunteers, were too deeply saturated with Republican ideas to follow Dumouriez against the Jacobin government of France. This was the death-blow to Dumouriez' schemes; for on hearing of the decision of the artillery the line declared that it would never fight its brothers. Consequently he could only take over to the Austrians on April 5 a handful of hussars and his own staff, comprising three Lieutenant-Generals, Valence, Marassé, and Chartres, eight Major-Generals, one Colonel, and two Commissioners of War. Thus, like Lafayette, Dumouriez put his own honour before that of his country. But he had already done much for France. In diplomacy he had foreshadowed the policy which resulted in the Treaty of Basel; as a general he had understood how best in times of revolution to play upon the sentiment of the French soldier and make every use of the national traits of character; while as a strategist he was the forerunner of Napoleon in the art of offensive warfare.

During the early part of the year 1793 the French arms had been as unsuccessful in the Rhine Valley as in the Netherlands; while the French administration had become equally unpopular in both. So early as December 13 Custine had declared Mainz to be in a state of siege; and on December 31 all hopes of a native administration disappeared on the arrival of the three Deputies on mission from the Convention, Merlin of Thionville, Haussmann, and Rewbell. By the end of January, 1793, Mainz and the surrounding districts on the left bank of the Rhine had passed from a state of indifference, or sympathetic curiosity, to one of active hatred and hostility to the French. In spite of this on February 14 the Convention in Paris proclaimed the annexation of Mainz to France. Later in February elections for a Rhenish National Assembly were carried on under the supervision of the military authorities, with the result that on March 21 the Rhenish Convention was forced at the point of the bayonet to vote for annexation to France. Such was the state of affairs when, as we have seen, on March 27 Custine had to abandon his attempt to cover Mainz and to fall back on Landau. Custine entrusted the defence of Mainz to d'Oysé, an engineer officer who had served in America. The garrison of Mainz was composed of 23,000 troops. This force was not excessive, considering that many of the volunteers were married men and refused to take any risks, and further that the populace during the greater part of the siege had to be kept severely under military control. Mainz itself was well provisioned with ammunition,

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stores, and food supplies; and it was expected to be able to hold out till the middle of September.

The actual investment did not take place till April 14; and it was not till June 5 that the Prussians opened their heavy batteries on Castel and the French advanced posts on the islands. By July 17 the bombardment had been so severe that d'Oysé called a council of war to consider the situation. At this council the officer commanding the engineers clearly told him that it was impossible to make headway against the bombardment. The magazines were either exploded or empty. Moreover, the *moral* of the troops was quickly deteriorating; they were no longer anxious to take part in sorties. D'Oysé still desired to hold out; but his hand was forced by the three representatives, who, it is true, had done good work during the siege, but who now thought that the only way to save themselves from a long imprisonment in Germany was to capitulate on favourable terms. Negotiations were accordingly opened on July 18, and on July 23 the Prussian terms were accepted. The French garrison was to march out with the honours of war on condition of not serving against the Allies for one year; while Mainz with all its cannon and equipment was to fall a prize to the Prussians. Undoubtedly Mainz ought to have held out for at least another month. Accordingly the Convention refused to accept the terms of the surrender, and ordered all the officers of the headquarters staff of the Mainz garrison to proceed to Paris for trial. The Convention held such an example to be necessary at the moment when the fortresses on the north-east frontier of France were being invested, and the French troops in the south were retreating before the Spaniards on Perpignan and Bayonne.

When Custine fell back on Landau at the end of March he was in deep dejection; the Austrian and Prussian forces were overwhelming in numbers, and his own army was disorganised; it seemed as if he would have to evacuate the whole of Alsace. But fortunately for him the Austrians and Prussians did not pursue. The shadow of the impending partition of Poland and of the Treaty of St Petersburg lay between them, and prevented them from concentrating their efforts against the French. During April the main Austrian force under Wurmser lay watching Landau; the Prussians under Brunswick had their headquarters at Edenkoben, while an Austrian corps under Hohenlohe-Kirchberg lay overawing Zweibrücken. Mainz was thus securely covered. In the middle of May Custine was transferred from the command of the combined Army of the Rhine and the Moselle to that of the Army of the North and the Ardennes. But before relinquishing his command he had repaired the fortifications on the lines of Weissenburg, and strengthened the important fortress of Bitsch, which commanded the main pass across the Vosges. He had also made sure of the subsidiary passes, so that his communications with the Army of the Moselle were secured.

During the month of June the strength of the French armies

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increased ; on June 27, when the generals held a conference, the Army of the Moselle under Houchard was 40,000 strong, and that of the Rhine under Beauharnais 60,000 strong. But, though their numbers were great, both armies were untrustworthy, as they were full of raw, untrained troops; and no move was made till the middle of July. By this time Wurmser blocked the advance of the Army of the Rhine, lying between the mountains and the river at Edenkoben; while Brunswick with 18,000 men lay at Kaiserslautern, covering the passes there and ready, if necessary, to move to Kreuznach. Beauharnais, in the middle of July, crossed the Queis, and, moving slowly forward in touch with the Army of the Moselle, attacked Wurmser on July 19, and forced him on the night of the 24th to evacuate Edenkoben, and thus leave the road open to Neustadt, whereby the communications between the Austrians and the Prussians were for the moment cut. Meanwhile Houchard had started on July 16 from Saarbrücken ; but his advance had been very slow. When the news of the capitulation of Mainz was received, both the French armies halted, and then fell back. At this moment the position of the French in Alsace was seriously compromised. Houchard was withdrawn to succeed Custine in the command of the Army of the North ; and 30,000 men were drafted from the Armies of the Rhine and the Moselle to reinforce the Army of the North. On August 10 came the decree of the Convention whereby all officers of noble birth were cashiered, with the result that the staffs of the armies had to be entirely reorganised.

This decree was the work of the War Minister Bouchotte, who had succeeded Beurnonville in the beginning of April. Bouchotte was above all things a Jacobin; his principal ally was Vincent; he filled all places in the War Office with Jacobins. But his positive work must not be forgotten, and the difficulties of his position must be appreciated. He had five great armies to provide for. He was, moreover, handicapped by the fact that he lacked prestige, and had not sufficient authority to carry out his orders. He was simply the servant of the Committee of Public Safety, from which he had to take all his orders. The Committee kept an actual control over the various generals by means of its Commissioners, or Representatives on Mission. The powers of these Commissioners were very large; they could choose what agents they pleased ; they could seize for the public service any goods or chattels which they considered necessary ; they had power if necessary to supersede the general in command of the troops; and all administrative and municipal bodies had to obey them. As might be expected, the Commissioners, who knew little of war, made many mistakes; but they made up for this by their courage, zeal, and patriotism. Moreover, they did much during the summer of 1793 to reconcile the regulars and the volunteers. They insisted on the abandonment of the old white uniform of the regulars, and the adoption by all troops of the new Republican

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blue uniforms. During the constant changes of generals and staff officers the Commissioners supplied the only continuity of ideas and aims in the various armies, and undoubtedly gave great assistance to those military authorities who were hastily placed in commands which were absolutely new to them.

After the French retreat on Weissenburg Wurmser proposed to Brunswick that he should help him to envelope that position, while Hohenlohe threatened Bitsch, and that, after crushing the French army, the combined Austrian and Prussian armies should advance on Strassburg. But Brunswick refused. Now that Mainz had fallen, Lucchesini, the Prussian Foreign Minister, wanted peace and an opportunity to study the Polish problem. Further, it had become evident that the Austrian plan was to overrun Alsace with a view to annexing it permanently to the Austrian dominions. The Army of the Moselle lay at Brunswick's mercy, but he made no attempt to annihilate it. Meanwhile Wurmser, a dashing officer—in spite of his sixty-nine years—decided to push on after the Army of the Rhine. By August 24 he had driven the French back from their advanced position in the Bienwald on to the lines of Weissenburg. The Commissioners thereon deprived Beauharnais of his command. Beauharnais was succeeded by Landremont, who in turn was succeeded by Carlens; but both of these generals were mere nonentities, and the real command lay in the hands of the Commissioners. The French were very strongly posted along the lines of Weissenburg; their right being unturnable, lying as it did on Lauterburg and the Rhine, while their left rested on Weissenburg and the mountains. It was quite evident that, without concerted action with the Prussians, Wurmser with 30,000 Austrians would be unable to dislodge the Army of the Rhine, which was about 35,000 strong. It was not till October that Wurmser could get a promise of help from the Prussians. The plan of the Allies was that Wurmser should force the lines of Weissenburg, while Brunswick should march down from Zweibrücken and occupy Bitsch and Wörth. On October 13, in spite of faulty arrangements, Wurmser managed to penetrate the French lines. Meanwhile the Prussians had occupied Bitsch. The French fell back in great disorder; and by October 18 they had taken up a position under the guns of Strassburg. Fortunately for the French neither the Prussians nor the Austrians interfered with this retreat, although the Allies must have known that the French army had practically disbanded to plunder, and that it was incapable of making any sort of resistance. Wurmser thought he had already borne too much of the fighting; while Brunswick considered that his orders forbade him to go further south than Wörth. Accordingly, although the French armies were now completely separated, Brunswick did not crush the Army of the Moselle, which was retreating behind the Saar; while Wurmser, instead of boldly attacking the French in front of Strassburg, contented himself with laying what

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he considered would be the foundation of the new Austrian *régime* in Alsace. The result was that the inhabitants of Alsace forgot their dislike of the French in their hatred of the invaders; while the Prussians, seeing through the Austrian intentions, refused to move forward to Saverne and help Wurmser in his attempt to drive the Army of the Rhine into Upper Alsace. Thus once again the French had been saved by the jealousies arising out of the different political aims of the Allies.

So far during the year 1793 the French had met with a succession of disasters. But fortune was now about to turn. The first Committee of Public Safety had made every effort to retrieve the disasters following on the desertion of Dumouriez; but, though it contained many able men, none of them had shown any great aptitude for military affairs. The second Committee of Public Safety which came into being on July 10 had also little military knowledge. However on August 14 it added to its members two special military members; these were two engineer officers, Prieur of the Côte d'Or, who was to be responsible for providing the material for war, and Carnot, who was to have complete authority over the *personnel* of the army. The first problem that the new members had to face was how to make the most of the *levée en masse*. On August 16 the Convention had decreed that the French people should rise to a man to defend their independence. This decree was followed on August 23 by a more emphatic order, which called out all men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five for service at the front, while the aged and infirm were to be employed, if necessary, in transport, garrison, and hospital work at home. The municipal authorities had raised their quotas by drafting to the army all the maimed, the blind, and the halt, since everybody who could afford to do so had been allowed to purchase a substitute. Consequently the reinforcements which arrived at the frontier in August and September, if they actually did arrive, were generally worse than useless. Carnot, however, by October had compelled the local authorities to enforce his amendments to the law. Moreover, instead of forming fresh corps, he drafted the men who were requisitioned into the existing *cadres*. One of his next duties was to take vigorous measures to reinforce discipline in the Army of the Rhine. On October 17 two Commissioners, Saint-Just and Le Bas, were despatched to Strassburg to report on the failure of the army to hold the lines of Weissenburg and to punish all abuses without pity.

The Commissioners found plenty of work to do. It was quite evident that the Army of the Rhine had suffered defeat firstly for lack of guidance, secondly for lack of discipline. They proceeded at once to rectify the first evil; they took the chief command out of the hands of the incompetent Carlens and sent for Pichegru. Pichegru was the first of the new race of young commanders who owed their position entirely to the Revolution. He had commenced his military career in 1789 by enlisting as a private in the artillery. In 1792 he had received his

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commission, and late in that year became a colonel of volunteers. He had never yet seen a shot fired; but he had had the good fortune to impress Bouchotte, and had already commanded a corps on the Upper Rhine. His great merit was his power of penetration; he also possessed a powerful personality which inspired the soldiers. Though he had no originality, he had that instinctive knowledge which could distinguish a good from a bad plan. But above all he could choose his men and make them work for him. The Commissioners, aided by Pichegru, proceeded to establish a military tribunal for the Army of the Rhine. This tribunal had power to deal summarily with all cases sent before it, and at once began to make examples of officers and private soldiers who either shirked their duties or were at all insubordinate. The next task of the Commissioners was to organise a proper system of requisition and to enforce the Law of the *maximum*. Thus the army was soon fully provisioned and all excuse for plundering was removed.

The Commissioners with the Army of the Moselle, Lacoste and Baudot, tried to imitate the reforms of Saint-Just and Le Bas but with little success. They were mere fanatics and lacked the instinctive knowledge of what was necessary at the moment. But salvation came to the Army of the Moselle in another way. At the commencement of November Delauney was succeeded in his command by Hoche. Lazare Hoche was the son of an old soldier. He was but 25 years old when he took over the command of the Army of the Moselle; his early youth had been spent as a groom in the royal stables; he had next served as a private in the Gardes Françaises; during the Revolutionary wars he had distinguished himself at Maestricht, Nieuport, and Dunkirk. He had been in turn the friend of Servan, Marat, and Robespierre. Later he had attracted the attention of Carnot and owed his new command to him. Unlike Pichegru he had actually seen service, but like him he had practically had no training for high command; he had the additional misfortune that he was naturally despised by his enemies.

Hoche spent the first three weeks of November reorganising his army and restoring discipline by impartially striking down all offenders of whatsoever rank. Towards the end of November, thanks to reinforcements from the Army of the Rhine, Hoche had 40,000 troops under his command. Accordingly he determined at once to resume the offensive and make an attempt to relieve Landau. He ought undoubtedly to have worked in conjunction with Pichegru and driven the Allies back from Strassburg, by threatening their right in the direction of Wörth and Bitsch. But he was jealous of Pichegru and decided to try and relieve Landau by way of Kaiserslautern. Operations commenced on November 17. The Prussians at once evacuated Wörth, and, quickly concentrating, fell back fighting on Kaiserslautern. On November 28 the three days' battle of Kaiserslautern began; the Prussians held a strongly entrenched position with 20,000 men, while Hoche attacked

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them with 35,000 troops. The French infantry fought well and proved the value of Hoche's new discipline. But the enemy was too strongly posted; and Hoche, who had not studied the ground, made his great effort against the Prussian right, which was really the strongest part of the position. On the 30th Hoche fell back after losing some 2000 men, while the Prussian loss was only 829. Meanwhile Pichegru, in spite of Hoche's jealousy, had determined to make use of this opportunity. On November 18, with 33,000 troops, he had moved out and attacked Wurmser. The Austrian right was now uncovered by the withdrawal of the Prussians. Accordingly Wurmser fell back on Hagenau.

After Hoche's defeat at Kaiserslautern the Prussians continued to hold the three roads leading to Landau by Kaiserslautern, Amweiler, and Dahme. Hoche therefore determined to leave a force to contain the Prussians at the passes and to go himself to help Pichegru with the remainder of the troops at his disposal. The first thing to be done was to pick up communication with Pichegru. After a week's hard fighting on December 22 columns from the Armies of the Rhine and Moselle drove the enemy out of Wörth and effected a junction. Wurmser at once fell back on the lines of Weissenburg. The jealousy between Hoche and Pichegru threatened to neutralise all the advantages that had hitherto been gained. But on December 24 Lacoste and Baudot, the Commissioners with the Army of the Moselle, appointed Hoche Commander-in-chief of the united Armies of the Rhine and the Moselle. Wurmser was preparing to evacuate Weissenburg on December 26 when Hoche attacked him with great fury. The result of this action was that by December 27 the French were once again masters of the lines of Weissenburg; while on December 30 Wurmser retreated across the Rhine at Philippsburg, and Brunswick himself evacuated Worms and Oppenheim. Landau was relieved; and early in January, 1794, the whole of the Palatinate was in the hands of the French. Hoche was desirous of continuing his success; but the cold weather and lack of provisions awoke the plundering spirit in his army. His quarrel with Pichegru to a certain extent also paralysed his actions, so that he had to put his army into cantonments for the rest of the winter.

In Flanders during the year 1793 fortune varied very much as it did in the Rhine valley. Dumouriez was succeeded by Dampierre, a bold and courageous executor of orders, but no originator, and apt to lose his head. Immediately on taking over the command Dampierre ordered the Army of the North to concentrate under the fortresses of Valenciennes, Douai, and Lille. His task was no light one. Every day the Austrians were being reinforced by Prussian, Hanoverian, English, and Dutch contingents; while his army was utterly disorganised and dispirited. The troops had lost all belief in their officers; nobody could tell who would be the next to desert. The infantry of the line and the artillery only required a little care and a tight hand; but the weakened cavalry

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regiments were absolutely untrustworthy; while the volunteers were constantly drunk, and the whole army was demoralised by the numbers of women who were in camp. Such was the only army which stood between the Allies and Paris. But Coburg was no Marlborough; he was now 56 years old, a quiet, modest soldier who never trusted his own judgment. His right hand man was Colonel Mack; but Mack's ideas of strategy were not sound, as Ulm was to prove later, and he was hampered by the fact that the Emperor distrusted him.

On April 8 the Allies held a council at Antwerp. Austria was represented by Metternich and Starhemberg; England by the Duke of York and Lord Auckland; Holland by the Prince of Orange; Prussia by Count Keller. Coburg, Mack, and Valence also attended. It was settled that Coburg should be commander-in-chief of the Allies. But the council did not separate before the policy of the dismemberment of France was openly announced. Lord Auckland, on behalf of England, declared that his country had entered on the war with the intention of getting compensation. Coburg and Mack attempted to show that any plan of dismemberment would retard the progress of the campaign. Their objections were *bona fide*, but it was only too well known what was the policy of the Emperor and Thugut. On April 9 the Allies had moved forward and cut off Condé from Valenciennes. Dampierre ought at once to have advanced from his camp at Bouchain, and attacked the Austrian force which was round Condé, since it was divided in two by the Scheldt. He missed his opportunity and simply moved to an entrenched camp at Famars behind Valenciennes. When at last, on May 1, he did attack Coburg the Austrians had been strongly reinforced by a Prussian corps. Dampierre was killed in action on May 7. The Commissioners at once appointed Lamarche, who was sixty years of age, to succeed him; but Lamarche had no better success than Dampierre and contented himself with further fortifying the camp of Famars. Early in May two diversions were attempted; the one under Championnet in the direction of Furnes was meant to threaten Ostend; the other under Kilmaine in the direction of Namur ended in the barren victory of Arlon. But the Allies, who had now been reinforced by Dutch and Hanoverian troops, could afford to neglect such diversions, and on May 23 Coburg advanced against the main French force, enveloped it, and forced it out of its position at Famars. Thereupon Lamarche fell back on Bouchain, where he was succeeded by Custine.

Custine's first idea was to concentrate the Armies of the North, the Moselle, and the Rhine, and to clear the Netherlands. But Bouchotte refused to give his consent to such a bold measure. Consequently Custine, having nothing but the Army of the North to work with, set himself to fortify Caesar's camp with the intention of reorganising his army there. He drew up strict orders both for officers and men; he compelled all troops to wear their proper uniforms; he cashiered all

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officers absent without leave; and he insisted on steady drill for four hours a day. He decided, since it was impossible to recruit his army, to divide up the existing force into battalions 450 strong. He also set himself to train men as cavalry soldiers and to try to procure horses. He was so far successful that by July 13 he had 39,000 disciplined and organised troops under his command, of which number 4800 were cavalry. His indiscretion brought about his fall; for, although he publicly protested against the Girondists, yet in private he railed against Pache, Marat, Danton, and Robespierre. He was constantly quarrelling with Bouchotte. He fell foul of the Commissioners, Celliez and Dufrenne, and even went so far as to imprison them. Consequently on July 10—the day on which Condé fell—the Committee of Public Safety recalled Custine to Paris. Once there the hatred of the Jacobins and the fall of Mainz and Valenciennes settled his fate, and he was guillotined on August 28. Custine's successor was Kilmaine, an Irishman, a distinguished cavalry officer; but he could do no more to relieve Valenciennes than Custine had done before him. Coburg now had 24,000 troops round Valenciennes engaged in the siege, and a covering force of 20,000, while he had 10,000 at his own headquarters. In July he was further reinforced by 15,000 Hessians. On July 26 the town and fortress surrendered. The fall of Mainz, Condé, and Valenciennes, came as a great blow to the whole of France; but the lesson had a very salutary effect. The Committee of Public Safety grasped two facts: first, that France must make a more national effort; and secondly that the war must be carried on by experts.

While France was preparing to arise with renewed vigour from her ashes, the Allies were courting their own doom. Austria at once claimed Condé and Valenciennes as her own special possessions; she hinted also that she desired to extend her frontier to the Somme and carry it up to Sedan. Thereupon the English, the Prussians, and the Dutch, each expressed a desire to set about securing the territories which they coveted. It was with difficulty that Coburg could induce the Allies to promise to remain with him till he had carried out his design of forcing the French from Caesar's camp. Caesar's camp was a strong position—the north face covered by the Senne, the east by the Scheldt. The Allies were in overwhelming strength; and, after feinting at both the north and east sides Coburg had still enough troops to enable the Duke of York to turn the rear of the camp by way of Cambrai. But the movements of the Allies were so slow that on August 7 the French escaped behind the Scarpe, and entrenched themselves at Biache between Arras and Douai. There Kilmaine was succeeded by Houchard (August 9). Houchard was of foreign extraction and could speak but little French. He first saw service as an officer in the Seven Years' War; he had later gained his laurels under Custine. He was no general, but a mere leader of partisans, who owed his position to the fact that he was a *protégé* of Bouchotte.

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The position he had to face was a serious one. His army had been driven aside and was too weak to threaten the enemies' communications. Consequently the road to Paris was open, and Coburg's cavalry could have arrived there in four days. Moreover at this moment the English fleet held Toulon; Marseilles and Lyons had risen against the government; and the war in the Vendée was assuming serious proportions. But the greed of the Allies saved France. The English insisted on laying siege to Dunkirk; at the same moment Frederick William ordered the Prussian troops to move into Luxemburg.

By September Carnot's strategy was beginning to shape itself. The French armies were no longer to be frittered away in detachments, but they were to be concentrated to deal crushing blows. The Army of the North numbered quite 100,000 men; and a subsidiary force, 30,000 strong, drawn mainly from the Army of the Moselle, was gathered at Soissons to save Paris from a raid. By September 5 the force to relieve Dunkirk had been got together and numbered 42,000 men. Carnot's plan had been that Houchard should seize Furnes and thus cut the enemy from their base. But Houchard thought this too dangerous, and proposed to make a direct attack on the Hanoverian covering force at Bergues and Hondschoote. Owing to the swampy ground the force of Hanoverians under Marshal Freytag at Bergues was not in direct communication with the Duke of York's force at Rosendal. Consequently, when the French heavy columns reached the Yser on September 6, Freytag could only oppose them with some 10,000 troops. But Houchard's dispositions were so faulty and he kept so little touch between his different columns that at the end of the day the French had to fall back behind the Yser. On September 8 Walmoden, who had succeeded Freytag, gave battle to the French at Hondschoote with a force of 9000 infantry. Houchard only brought half his force into the field; but he so outnumbered the enemy that at nightfall he had driven them out of Hondschoote with a loss of 2585 men out of their 9000. As he did not advance, the Duke of York early on the morning of the 9th was enabled to make a hasty retreat to Furnes, and Dunkirk was thus relieved. It had never been in very great danger, as it had only been invested on one side, and the English fleet had never attempted to co-operate with the army. Meanwhile on September 11 Quesnoi had surrendered, and Coburg had proceeded to invest Maubeuge. Houchard, in spite of his victory at Hondschoote, found himself unable to utilise his success, and fell back on his camp at Arras, where on September 28 he was succeeded in command of the Army of the North by Jourdan.

Jourdan had served in America, but on his return had been obliged to give up his commission owing to Ségur's decree against the *roturiers*. On the outbreak of the Revolutionary wars he had been chosen to command a battalion of volunteers. The new commander's task was to cover Paris and relieve Maubeuge. Maubeuge was strongly invested. Coburg

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had surrounded the place with 25,000 men and maintained a covering force of 45,000 in an entrenched position. Maubeuge was the last fortress of the French barrier in the north-east, and its loss would have completely opened up the way to Paris. Every effort was therefore made to help Jourdan in his attempt to save it. On October 15 the relieving force, 50,000 strong, under Jourdan and Carnot attacked the Austrian covering force at Wattignies. The fight raged all that day and was most furious on the right, in front of the village of Wattignies, which was taken and lost three times. On the 17th the French expected another general engagement, but the enemy had drawn off during the night. Coburg retreated and raised the siege of Maubeuge.

Thus the campaign of 1793 ended most successfully for France. The Allies, it is true, still maintained themselves in the north-east and held Valenciennes and Condé, but they had failed in their attempts on Dunkirk and Maubeuge. On the eastern frontier Landau had been relieved and Alsace cleared of the enemy. In the south-east the army of the Maritime Alps had succeeded in expelling the enemy from France. The only French territory in the hands of the enemy was Roussillon in the south-west, where the Spaniards had driven the French under the walls of Perpignan.

With the accession of Jourdan, Hoche, and Pichegru, to the command of the Armies of the North, the Moselle, and the Rhine, the war entered another phase. The mainstay of the French armies was no longer the old regular troops but the new levies of the Revolution. A new system of tactics and a new system of strategy were appearing. Early in 1794 the difference between volunteers and regulars disappeared once for all, when by the decree of January 9 the amalgamation, which had been foreshadowed by Dumouriez, was actually effected by order of Dubois-Crancé. Throughout all the different French armies two battalions of volunteers were joined to one battalion of regulars, and thus formed a definite unit called a *demi-brigade*. The demi-brigade took the place of the old regiment. The brigading was finished by March 21, on which day the army of France was composed of 196 demi-brigades of infantry of the line, and 22 demi-brigades of light infantry. The cavalry was composed of 27 regiments of heavy cavalry, 59 regiments of light cavalry, forming in all 90,000 sabres. The artillery was 15,000 strong; it retained its old regimental organisation; but 9 new light artillery regiments were added to it. The organisation of the engineers was left unchanged, the strength of the corps being fixed at 5300. The total number of men under arms was thus 850,000.

As regards administration, a great improvement was made in the method of supplying the army with food. A general or commissioner was no longer allowed to make what requisitions he chose. The decree of February, 1794, laid down that in future the only persons who could make requisitions should be members of the *Commission des Subsistances*.

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This Commission worked systematically and sensibly. It summoned to Paris representatives from the provincial municipalities and carefully explained its methods. The consequence of this, and of the prompt payment which ensued, was that for the future there was no longer any real trouble in victualling the army. Another of the great difficulties which the War Office had to overcome was that of providing arms, ammunition, and equipment for these swollen establishments. The government very wisely solved this problem by summoning to the aid of the executive all the best practical skill, and all the latest scientific research, that France possessed. Nine great factories were established in Paris which turned out daily a thousand muskets. Church bells were used as raw material for making big guns. Four enormous forges were set going in the Ardennes by Clouet, professor of chemistry at Mezières. From these foundries and those in Paris 20,000 guns a year, of various calibre, were handed over to the military authorities. A new system of manufacturing powder was invented at Grenelle; the factory there turned out 30,000 lbs. a day. Fourcroy invented a new way of treating steel, whereby swords and bayonets could be made at great speed. The Republic, in the words of Barère, was an immense besieged town, and France one vast camp.

The new strategy and the new tactics really involved no new principle: they were simply an adaptation of the old maxim of throwing superior weight on the vital spot. The strategist was in future not to attempt to guard every pass, nor to pin himself to the old roads and fortresses. The art of war was no longer to consist in elaborate sieges. To attack boldly when possible, to surprise the enemy by sudden concentrations and rapid movements, was in future to be the order of the day. The battle once won, the enemies' fortresses could be reduced at leisure. In the preparations which led to Hondschoote we see for the first time a real grasp of these principles. An army must no longer trust in fortified lines and a passive defence; the secret of all defence is the counterstroke. A new system of tactics had also to be invented to meet the requirements of the new conditions, and to suit the genius and ardour of the revolutionary soldiers. Frederick's system of careful deployments in line, of constantly seeking the flank of his enemy, was admirably suited to an army of trained veterans accustomed to fight against enemies who could not manœuvre. But the French had neither the patience nor the steadiness for such precise movements; moreover Frederick's tactics presumed an immobile enemy. What was now needed was a system whereby full advantage could be taken of the superior intelligence and *élan* of the French soldiers. This was effected by no longer attacking in line but returning to the old system of attack in column. The columns were at such distances and intervals that they could rapidly be deployed into line; and were covered on the centre and flanks by heavy clouds of skirmishers. The skirmishers were pushed

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boldly up to the enemy's line, and the battalion columns supplied the superior weight which was necessary to crush the enemy at the vital spot. The objective was now no longer the enemy's flank, but more often his centre, whereby his force might be split in two and one half of it surrounded and annihilated. The artillery was still used to open the battle and to cover the advance of the infantry, but it was being used more and more in heavy masses. The duty of the cavalry was to break the enemy's cavalry or infantry; it was usually handled with great boldness. The guiding principle of the new strategy and tactics was Danton's phrase: "*l'audace et toujours l'audace.*"

While it was quite clear that the French were once again establishing their claim to be a nation of soldiers, and were rapidly shaping their military system to meet the new requirements of the age, the Allies were content to abide by their old methods. The Prussians clung to the old system of the great Frederick and in their hearts despised every other army and system of warfare. The Austrians blindly followed the Prussian lead. The ignorance of their profession shown by British officers was in the opinion of Wellington contemptible; the staff officers never supervised their commands: but still he allowed that there were many excellent regiments in the British service. The Duke's comment on the operations of the Allies during the year 1794–5 clearly shows one of the causes of their failure. "The system of the Austrians," he writes, "was all the fashion...that was to post themselves with an advanced guard some ten miles in front, and extend their small posts far too wide, under the notion that this was a security from surprise. What usually happened was that the distant post was attacked and driven in, the small one fell back in confusion, and the enemy arrived at their heels and attacked the main army with every advantage." In fact the old notion of passive resistance on fortified lines died hard.

Meanwhile the bonds of alliance were becoming more and more strained. It was only the heavy subsidy of £150,000 a month, which Pitt paid to the Prussians, that kept them, in outward form at least, faithful to the Coalition. The French, on the contrary, from the end of 1793 had the additional advantage of a single control. The whole of the operations in all the various theatres of war were practically under the supervision of Carnot. There was thus a unity and sense of proportion in the campaigns of 1794 which had hitherto been lacking. Carnot divined that the Allies would concentrate on the Sambre or Meuse, attempt to overwhelm the French resistance in the north-east, and march on Paris. But, instead of acting on the defensive, he instituted a system of bold counterstrokes. Jourdan was replaced in command of the Army of the North by Pichegru, under whose command the Army of the Ardennes was also placed. On March 11 Pichegru received Carnot's rough sketch for the campaign. The idea was to stand firmly on the defensive round Maubeuge, to feint in Flanders, and to throw the main attack on the

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Austrian communications in the direction of Charleroi. Pichegru could only oppose 130,000 French troops to the 148,000 of the Allies. During January and February the French gained some successes, but Landrecies fell into the hands of the Allies. Later, in April and May, the French left under Moreau and Souham advanced against Clerfayt and defeated him at Menin and Courtrai: they then advanced towards Ghent. Mack, Coburg's chief of the staff, thought he saw an excellent opportunity of cutting off this column by a joint movement on Lille from the direction of Menin and Tournay. Accordingly the English and Austrian columns were timed to reach Lille on May 18. But Souham, who commanded in Pichegru's absence, hearing of this scheme, by an admirable forced march from Lille, brought together at Turcoing on the 17th a force composed of columns under Moreau, Macdonald, and Vandamme, and on the 18th defeated in detail the English and Austrians before they had formed their junction. This victory caused Coburg to imagine that the principal effort of the enemy would be made by the Army of the North in the direction of Flanders. Consequently he withdrew a large portion of his force to the north.

By June Carnot's great scheme was in working order. In May, Jourdan, with 45,000 men from the Army of the Moselle, came to take over the command of the Army of the Ardennes. The new army so formed numbered some 100,000 men, and was to be known later as the Army of the Sambre and Meuse. It might almost be called an army of veterans; and certainly in no other army were the soldiers of the Revolution seen to more advantage. Jourdan forced his way over the Meuse, and drove Beaulieu back before him (May 21–31). He had thus penetrated the allied line of defence and threatened Namur. But once again operations were beginning to slacken for want of one single guiding hand, when the Commissioners, by the advice of Levasseur, appointed Jourdan Commander-in-chief of the joint armies of the North, the Ardennes, and the Moselle. Jourdan's first action in his new command was to take steps to lay siege to Charleroi. Meanwhile he ordered the Army of the North to make a forward movement which resulted in the capture of Ypres and the defeat of Clerfayt at Hooglide. But Jourdan's mistake of attempting the siege of Charleroi before the Allies had been beaten in the field was clearly seen, when on June 16 the Austrians, under Beaulieu and Alvintzy, appeared in force on the Sambre and forced him to raise the siege of Charleroi. The Austrians, however, were soon checked; and Charleroi was once again besieged and fell after a siege of one week.

Jourdan had barely received the surrender of Charleroi before Coburg arrived with a force of 70,000 to relieve it. To oppose this force Jourdan had 80,000 at Fleurus; moreover he had already entrenched his position, and had even procured a captive balloon to assist him in reconnoitring. Coburg had committed the usual Austrian fault of neglecting to concentrate, and his force was too small. The French

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occupied the heights of Fleurus. The battle commenced at 3 o'clock on the morning of June 25. The artillery of the Allies was very numerous and well handled; so accurate was its fire that three times the French were driven back on their entrenchments. At midday, after nine hours' fighting, the French left and centre were driven in. But Kléber managed to restore order on the left, and at six o'clock in the evening Jourdan gathering together all his reserves threw the enemy into confusion. The Allies lost close on 8000 in the battle. The battle of Fleurus was far-reaching in its results. In France it sounded the knell of the Reign of Terror and indirectly resulted in the fall of Robespierre. Its effect on the war was immediate. The Allies were each desirous of protecting their own communications. The English thought only of covering Holland, the Austrians of reaching the Rhine. Thus the French got possession at once, without further fighting, of the whole of the difficult country cut up by the Lys, the Scheldt, the Dendre, the Senne, and the Dyle. Meanwhile the isolated fortresses of Landrecies, Quesnoy, Valenciennes, and Condé made but little resistance. Accordingly the French were enabled to continue their advance. Pichegru seized Malines and Antwerp, while Jourdan drove the Austrians back through Louvain and Liége.

The success of the military operations in the Low Countries during 1794 must be attributed in the main to Jourdan. Pichegru was no general; he was essentially a politician; by his quarrelsome temper he hindered rather than assisted his colleagues. But in spite of this Pichegru was to make a greater name than Jourdan. In October, while Jourdan crushed the Austrians, Pichegru received orders to invade the United Provinces. Accordingly he followed the route that Dumouriez had sketched out in 1793. He captured Bergen-op-Zoom, Breda, Hertogenbosch, and all the Dutch fortresses in Brabant. He then crossed the Meuse at Grave. The English and Dutch troops retreated behind the Yssel and ultimately evacuated Old Holland. In spite of an extraordinarily severe winter the French troops, ragged, hungry, and worn-out, pressed on, crossed the Leck, and were received with rapture by the Republican party in Amsterdam in January, 1795. Meanwhile Gertruydenberg, Dort, Rotterdam, and the Hague surrendered without a blow. To crown all, the French cavalry under Moreau, supported by a solitary battery of horse artillery, pushed on to the Helder, found that river frozen hard, and, riding sword in hand to the Island of Texel, captured the Dutch fleet. By February the whole of the United Provinces had submitted to the French, and a large section of the people were demanding the French alliance.

While Pichegru was starting on these conquests, Jourdan had 155,000 troops concentrated on the Meuse. In September he moved his right wing under Schérer across the river at Namur. Schérer defeated Clerfayt, who had succeeded Coburg, at the Ourthe on September 18. On October 2 the French drove the Austrians back across the Roer. In

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October Jourdan's main army forced Clerfayt back on the Rhine and took successively Cologne, Andernach, and Coblenz. The consequence was that by January, 1795, Jourdan was in contact on his left at Cleves with the Army of Holland, and on his right at Coblenz with the combined Army of the Moselle and Rhine.

The result of the operations of the combined Army of the Rhine and Moselle during the summer of 1794 was that the Prussians were gradually pushed out of the Vosges. In the autumn Möllendorf, who knew that the news from Poland was unfavourable, refused to risk his army in any further engagements, and, after evacuating position after position, fell back across the Rhine on October 6. Thereon the Army of the Moselle, which formed the left of the combined Army of the Rhine, swung through Trier, and picked up connexion with Jourdan, who had occupied Coblenz on October 23. The French, now that the enemy had abandoned the left bank of the Rhine, seized the bridge-head at Rheinfels on November 2, and occupied Mannheim on December 25. Meanwhile Mainz and Luxemburg were invested.

In 1792 the command of the Army of the South had been entrusted to General Montesquiou. His duty was twofold: first to secure the neutrality of Switzerland; secondly to operate against the Sardinians. The Swiss, as was natural, were greatly incensed against the French because of the massacre of the Swiss Guards in August, 1792; and above all owing to the attempt of the Constituent Assembly to annex Geneva to France. Montesquiou, however, succeeded in re-establishing peaceful relations with Switzerland. The neutrality of Switzerland was most important to the French. Switzerland covered the French frontier on the south-east. Its occupation by the Allies would have allowed them to turn the rear of the Army of the Rhine. While Montesquiou was successfully negotiating with the Swiss, a division of his army, commanded by Anselme, had occupied Nice and was holding the line of the Var.

The seizure of Nice and the violation of Savoy, added to the close relationship which existed between the House of Savoy and the Bourbons, caused Sardinia to declare war on France. The Sardinians occupied the strong position of Saorgio and held the crest of the mountains. They were thus in a position to invade France. But winter put an end to operations. During the first half of 1793 the French, who were commanded by Kellermann and Biron, were just able to hold the enemy in check. In July and August, owing to the troubles at Lyons and Marseilles and the English occupation of Toulon, the Sardinians successfully crossed the passes and entered Savoy. But in September Kellermann, after two actions, drove the invading corps of 20,000 Sardinians back from Aigueville on to the Mont Cenis Pass, in spite of the fact that they were now reinforced by a corps of Austrians.

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During the year 1794 the French forces in the south-east were split up into two corps, known as the Army of the Alps and the Army of Italy. This was a grave mistake, as Bonaparte and other generals pointed out; it resulted in ill-timed efforts and wasted opportunities. In March and April the Army of the Alps made several unsuccessful attempts to seize the Mont Cenis Pass. However on April 23 Dumas got possession of the St Bernard Pass, and on May 14 he captured the Mont Cenis also. Meanwhile the Army of Italy was endeavouring to oust the Sardinian General Colli from his strong camp at Saorgio. The camp of Saorgio covered the important Col di Tenda; from Tenda the road ran straight to Turin. Bonaparte, who commanded the artillery of the Army of Italy, acted as chief adviser to General Dumerbion, an old nonentity. It was by his advice that the Committee of Public Safety allowed General Dumerbion to violate the neutrality of Genoa. A turning movement was then made by the sources of the Tanaro, and on April 20 Masséna seized the redoubts of the Col di Tenda. As the result of twenty days' fighting the French captured 4000 prisoners and 70 guns, and picked up communication with the Army of the Alps. Thus by May the French held the principal chain of the Alps, and were at liberty to invade the plain of Piedmont. But here their success came to an end. The authorities in Paris considered that the combined Army of the Alps and Italy would be too large a corps to be manageable. Accordingly a draft of 10,000 men was despatched from the Army of the Alps to the Army of the Rhine. The Army of Italy was still nominally 80,000 strong, but 22,000 were absorbed by garrisons, 8000 by depot duty, and 15,000 were in hospital; consequently only 35,000 were left for duty in the field. The Sardinians and Austrians were holding the line of the fortresses Coni, Mondova, and Ceva. Bonaparte was authorised to draw up a plan of campaign; his idea was that the Army of the Alps should move along the left bank of the Stura, cross the mountains, and cut the communication between Coni and Demonte; while the Army of Italy would move forward, keep up communication on the left with the Army of the Alps, and occupy the plain of Coni. The armies started, and the Army of the Alps had penetrated the valley of the Stura, and the Army of Italy had already thrown back Colli's advance guard, when on August 21 orders came from Paris to halt, and then to retreat. The reason was that Robespierre had fallen, and all his friends, including Bonaparte, were regarded with suspicion. Consequently the Committee stopped all offensive operations in Piedmont, and contented itself with ordering the occupation of the principal passes of the Alps. Later in the year Masséna prevented the Austrians and Sardinians from seizing Savona and thus threatening the French communications by the Cornice Road. The campaign of 1794 had been unsuccessful; but it left the French in a position from which at any moment they could invade Piedmont.

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We have seen that, after the execution of Louis, the Spaniards declared war on France. The war was on one side national, on the other religious. The French were fighting to oppose the doctrine of kingship; the Spaniards took up arms to uphold the Holy Catholic Church, which had been robbed of its possessions by the Civil Constitution of the clergy. On both sides military preparations were conspicuous by their absence. Since 1763 the fortresses on either side of the frontier had been allowed to fall into disrepair. In 1793 on the side of France the remains of the old Army of the Centre did not exceed 25,000 men. With great difficulty, by April, 8000 men were collected between the Nive and Nivelle, and a similar number under the walls of Perpignan. The Spaniards were equally unprepared for war. The treasury was empty, the army on a very low peace footing, and there were no stores or material for war. Still the ministers of Charles IV boldly decided to attempt the conquest of Roussillon with 40,000 troops, and at the same time to cross the western Pyrenees and push up towards the Loire. All the passes of the Pyrenees are very high; and further, there are only two practicable passes at the east end, namely, the Col de Perche lying between the river Segre and the Auch, and the Col de Perthus between the Têt and the Ter. At the western end of the mountains lie the passes of Roncesvalles and Mayo covered by Pampeluna; and along the shore-road there are four passes covered by the towns of San Sebastian, Bilbao, Santander, and Oviedo. Owing to the great distance between the groups of passes at the two ends of the mountains the armies on both sides had to be divided into a western and an eastern army.

The Spanish Cabinet decided that an advance should at once be made into Roussillon, while the Army of the West should remain on the defensive in Navarre and Guipuscoa. Accordingly on April 15 the Spanish Army of the East crossed the frontier under General Ricardos. If that general had pushed on at once, he might have taken Perpignan. The French army was in a complete state of demoralisation. One commander succeeded another in rapid succession. Barbantane, Dagobert, d'Aoust, Thurreau, and Doppet quickly replaced each other at the whim of the Representatives on Mission. By the end of 1793 the French had had to abandon their first line of resistance on the Tech, and had fallen back on their second line the Têt. The French Army of the West had been a little more successful. By July it amounted to a force of 30,000 men — destitute, it is true, of all stores or magazines, without any ideas of obedience, and permeated by the venom of Jacobinism which trickled in from Bayonne. Its commanders succeeded each other with the usual rapidity. Servan, Delbecq, and Desprès-Crassier all enjoyed the doubtful honour for but a short time. Luckily for the French, the enterprising Spanish General Curo was held fast by orders from Madrid, and could make no forward movement. At last

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the French themselves were ready to assume the offensive. But their attempts to cross the Bidassoa in August and September both failed. In this quarter the net result of the year's fighting was that the French had just managed to cover Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port and Bayonne.

In 1794 the French were more successful. In the East they once more took the initiative. Dagobert, an old officer of the Seven Years' War, crossed the Pass of Perche and penetrated the valley of the Segre, where he died of fatigue before Saint Miguel. Dugommier, his successor, a good general, had the additional prestige of being a member of the Convention; he was moreover heartily seconded in his efforts by Perignon and Augereau, and by the new Commissioner and Representative Debrel. Starting in May with a force of 40,000 men, he once again recaptured the line of the Tech, and drove the enemy across the Pass of Perthes, and entered Catalonia, where he was confronted by the great Spanish lines at the Pass of Banyuls which covered Figueras. The French army was starving, and its only chance of getting stores was to capture Figueras. Dugommier accordingly decided to attack the lines on November 18; but he was killed while giving his orders. Perignon, his successor, attacked again the next day, drove the enemy from their position, and on November 27 forced Figueras to surrender. By 1795 all the fortresses of North Catalonia were in French hands.

At the end of 1793 the Western Army of the Pyrenees was reduced to less than 20,000 men; but in January, 1794, it received many drafts of recruits. It was not till June that these recruits could be considered soldiers. Meanwhile the army lay behind a strong line of fortifications stretching from the source of the Nive to the high road through Saint-Jean-de-Luz. The five divisions of the army were so posted that they held the heads of all the Spanish valleys which lead into France. The army was under the command of Muller, a very careful general. On July 31 the French stormed the Spanish camp of San Martial, captured all the artillery and crossed the Bidassoa. Fuenterrabia and San Sebastian fell during the first week of August. On August 9 the Spanish General Colomera fell back hurriedly from Tolosa. Muller ought at once to have advanced on Pampeluna. But by this time the Commissioner Pinet had so disgusted the inhabitants of Guipuscoa that a guerilla warfare broke out. The French advance was checked; they lost San Sebastian but managed to retain Tolosa. During the winter of 1794–5 the Spaniards began to lose heart. But though negotiations for peace were set on foot, they brought no immediate result. No forward movement was made during the spring, as peace seemed imminent. At last on June 25 operations commenced. On July 6 Moncey, the new French commander, cut the Spanish army in two at Irurzon. Then, leaving Dagonet to watch Pampeluna, he hurried after the Spanish left. By July 13 he had driven it in rout

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before him, crossed the Pass of the Pyrenees, and entered Vittoria. Passing on he took Bilbao. But on July 22 peace ended the campaign.

At the commencement of 1795 a general peace seemed possible. France had undoubtedly once again re-established her place in Europe. She had defeated all her enemies on land and added largely to her territories; she had at last gained her natural boundaries. The first outburst of the propagandist zeal had died out; Napoleon had not yet taught her to hunger after the territories of her neighbours. Now that the Terror was over, the time seemed opportune to establish her conquests on a sure footing, and to take stock of her interior position. But if France desired peace, much more did several of the members of the Coalition desire to end the war. Prussia, on October 16, 1794, had definitely withdrawn her forces from the contest. During 1794 she had only kept a force on the Rhine in return for the English subsidy. In October England considered that Prussia had not given her the value of her money, and accordingly had withdrawn the subsidy. Though Prussia grumbled, she was undoubtedly glad to have an excuse for retiring and concentrating her attention on Poland. Meanwhile the Emperor was negotiating with Catharine of Russia; and on January 3, 1795, they signed a treaty whereby they agreed to partition Turkey, Venice, Bavaria, and Poland. On the ocean the shadow of the Armed Neutrality of the North had already fallen across the English Sea Power. In the west Spain saw with dismay the barrier of the Pyrenees pierced, and the road to Madrid half uncovered. In the north Holland lay at the feet of the victor.

Such was the condition of Europe when, on January 12, Barthélemy, the French ambassador to Switzerland, a disciple of Choiseul, met the Prussian envoy Count von der Goltz, who had been sent by Frederick William at the instigation of Möllendorf, Prince Henry, and Lucchesini. Goltz died on February 6, before his mission had progressed very far, and his place was taken by Hardenberg, one of the future regenerators of Prussia. On April 5, 1795, Barthélemy on behalf of France, and Hardenberg on behalf of Prussia, signed the famous Treaty of Basel; whereby Prussia gave France a free hand on the left bank of the Rhine, and France in return undertook to respect a line of demarcation which virtually placed northern Germany under Prussian control. The vexed question of the left bank of the Rhine was to remain over till it could be settled at a European Congress; but a secret article arranged for compensation to Prussia, should the French territory be extended to the Rhine. Meanwhile Holland was treating for peace directly with the Committee of Public Safety, and on May 16 was glad to accept the hard terms offered her by France. She became virtually dependent on France, and had to bear her share in the war against England. The Coalition lost yet one other member. The death of the young Dauphin

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(Louis XVII) in June, and the advance of Moncey in northern Spain, threw the Court of Madrid into confusion. Moreover, the Queen was afraid that the odium of defeat might fall on her paramour, Godoy. Accordingly negotiations were opened up with France, and on July 22, 1795, peace was signed. France evacuated her conquests in Spain, and received in return the Spanish half of San Domingo. By the end of 1795 Saxony, the two Hesses, Portugal, Naples, the Duke of Parma, and the Pope, had all made their peace with France. It was quite clear that the French Republic, under the Directory, was a stable government; that France had now a clear definite policy; and that she was quite willing to lend herself to the old political formula of Europe, "the balance of power" — as interpreted by herself.

We see then that in 1795 France had fewer enemies to face. There was no likelihood of a campaign in the north, though the Army of the North under Moreau had to find strong garrisons for Holland and the Netherlands. In the Pyrenees, as we have seen, there was some fighting. But, so far as operations on land went, France had now practically only two foes to meet. These were the Austrians and the Sardinians. Accordingly the military operations of interest in this year centre round the Maritime Alps and the Rhine Valley. On the eastern frontier the French plan of campaign was that the Army of the Sambre and Meuse under Jourdan, and the Army of the Rhine and Moselle under Pichegru, should operate in conjunction and drive the enemy back on the Danube. Jourdan's first task was to undertake the siege of Luxemburg with his right wing, while Pichegru's left wing, or the old Army of the Moselle, undertook the reduction of Mainz. The sieges went on but slowly, because Carnot had been succeeded by Aubry and Letourneur, who were unable to grapple with the problems of army administration. Consequently, owing to lack of necessities and stores, both armies suffered very heavily from disease and desertion. In Jourdan's army alone, out of a total of 170,000, 76,300 were in hospital. Luxemburg had been invested on November 21, 1794; it was one of the strongest fortresses in Europe, and did not capitulate till June 25, 1795.

Jourdan then at once took the offensive. Owing to the lack of proper stores and supplies he had organised a flotilla from Holland which supplemented his convoys from France. He crossed the Rhine at Düsseldorf and, pushing back Clerfayt in front of him, reached the Main, where he hoped to co-operate with Pichegru. Pichegru had started on September 20 and captured Mannheim. By a sudden movement on Heidelberg he might have driven a wedge between the two Austrian armies, and, in conjunction with Jourdan, have crushed in detail first Clerfayt and then Wurmser. Panic was widespread through the German south-west; the Landgrave of Darmstadt and the Margrave of Baden fled hurriedly. But Pichegru had entered into secret negotiations with the Austrians. He had been promised the bâton of a Marshal

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of France, the government of Alsace, one million francs in cash, and 200,000 *louis* in *rentes*, a *hôtel* in Paris, and the Château of Chambord. In return he was to employ his army to overthrow the Directory and restore the Comte de Provence. Instead, therefore, of seizing this opportunity to crush the Austrians, Pichegru pushed forward two divisions without supports. He knew that Clerfayt could easily crush these isolated divisions and could then effect his junction with Wurmser. He hoped that the united Austrians would then be strong enough to give him an excuse for retreating. The plan succeeded. Pichegru had to fall back. The Austrians retook Mannheim, and Pichegru's army retired in disorder behind the lines of Weissenburg. There, on December 31, 1795, Pichegru signed an armistice with the Austrians.

Jourdan meanwhile had attempted to come to Pichegru's help. But he could not prevent Mannheim from capitulating. Hereupon, as Wurmser had crossed to the left bank of the Rhine, and Clerfayt was advancing against him, Jourdan fell slowly back and established a fortified camp at Traarbach. From this position, if necessary, he could safely cross the Moselle, watch the bridges over that river, and keep up communication with Luxemburg. Owing to the severity of the winter, the Austrians on December 19 demanded an armistice, to which Jourdan gladly acceded. The campaign was a great disappointment to the French. But their ill success in this year on the Rhine must be set down entirely to the treachery of Pichegru. If Pichegru had seized his opportunity at Heidelberg the Austrians ought to have been driven completely out of the Rhine Valley and forced back to the Danube.

In Italy during the first half of the year 1795, although the French held the crest of the mountains, they had to stand on the defensive. The combined Austro-Sardinian force numbered some 70,000 men, to which the French, owing to sickness and garrison duty, could only oppose 20,000 of the Army of Italy and 15,000 of the Army of the Alps.

The plan of campaign of the Allies was twofold. The King of Sardinia desired to operate by way of the Mont Cenis and St Bernard Passes and to penetrate into Savoy; while the Austrians, at the instigation of the English, intended to concentrate their efforts on the Riviera, working in conjunction with the British fleet. The French, on their side, disregarded Bonaparte's plan of a combined movement of the two armies by way of the Valley of Stura, and attempted to force their way into the plain of Piedmont by the Borghetta Pass; although the Cornice Road was insecure, as they had not command of the sea. At the end of April Kellermann was recalled to take command of the two armies. He found his troops in absolute destitution, strung out on a long line like a cordon. Masséna was at Vado on the right, Macquart at the Col di Tenda in the centre; while Serrurier on the left occupied the Col di Rosas, whence he held out a hand to the Army of the Alps, which stretched

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from Barcelonnette to Geneva. Kellermann's orders were to evacuate Nice and base himself on the river Var. In spite of this he determined to entrench his army in the position where he found it. During April, May, and June the Sardinians were defeated in their attempts to force the Col di Tenda and the St Bernard Pass. In June, de Vins, the commander-in-chief of the Allies, determined to make a combined movement. The Austrians were to march on Savona and the Sardinians on the Col di Tenda. Accordingly on June 24 de Vins made an attempt to occupy the town of Savona, and, though repulsed, he got possession of San Giacomo. At the same moment the Sardinians, under Colli, made two unsuccessful attempts on the Col di Tenda. The capture of San Giacomo made the French position untenable, and the French right wing had to fall back during the night of June 28. But, owing to the mutual jealousy of Colli and de Vins, the Allies were unable to press the retreating French. The French commander quickly perceived the want of union among the Allies, and determined to resume the offensive. It was his plan to use the Army of the Alps as a containing force while the Army of Italy swung round by the Col di Tenda into the plain of Piedmont. But the Committee of Safety ordered Kellermann to advance by Vado, Montenotte, and Millesimo to Ceva, and there to concentrate his forces for a campaign in 1796. Kellermann pointed out that his army was not adequate for such extensive operations. Thereon the Committee deposed him, and appointed Schérer in his place. Meanwhile de Vins frittered away his opportunity on the seaboard in useless expostulations with Nelson.

Schérer took over his command at the beginning of October. His army was in great destitution, and would have actually starved, if it had not been for help from Genoa, as otherwise he could only get supplies when the coasting ships managed to escape the English cruisers. He adopted Masséna's plan of pushing forward from the valley of the Tanaro. On November 23 Augereau surprised and routed the Austro-Sardinian centre, thus causing them to evacuate Loano; while Masséna aided him by a vigorous attack whereby he regained the crest of the Apennines. Serrurier on the left met with less success and was repulsed by Colli. But the French had effected their object; the allied centre was forced to retreat that night. On the next day Augereau pushed forward through the valley of Loano and crossed the Apennines, while part of Masséna's force under Joubert occupied the gorge of San Giacomo. Meanwhile, on the extreme right, the rest of Masséna's force under Dommartin, aided by the guns of the French naval squadron, drove Wallis off the Cornice Road and forced him to escape by the hill-tracks over the mountains. Schérer was anxious to turn the two days' battle at Loano into a complete victory, and at once despatched a division to reinforce Serrurier. But Colli withstood the French attack, and it was not until he heard of the defeat of his centre and left wing, that he retired at

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night, leaving behind him his artillery. Serrurier pursued him to Ceva where he took refuge under the guns of that fortress. Meanwhile by November 29 Wallis had effected his retreat to Dego and Aquila. The net result of this short campaign was that the Austrians lost 7000 men and 80 guns; while the Sardinians had lost their fortified camp, two fortresses, and a considerable number of magazines. Moreover the road to Piedmont now lay open. Undoubtedly Schérer ought to have pressed on, as Turin was in an uproar, and the allied army had practically ceased to exist. Instead of so doing he at once went into winter-quarters.

Thus by the end of 1795 the war had assumed an entirely new complexion. It was now no longer a question of the right of France to change her government, nor of the Allies desiring to indemnify themselves at the expense of continental France. The war, subsequent to the Triple Alliance of September, 1795, between England, Austria, and Russia, was a war of various motives. Austria intended to indemnify herself in Italy for her losses in the Low Countries; Russia hoped to find her indemnity in Turkey now that she had got all of Poland she could hope for. Russia joined this alliance out of anger against Prussia who had defeated the Russian schemes of aggrandisement by making peace with France at Basel. So long as Catharine lived Russia would not actively combine against France. England really believed that the French occupation of the Low Countries was a menace to her position, and above all she was desirous of retaining the colonial conquests she had made, or was about to make, at the expense of France and Holland. On the side of France also the war had assumed a different significance. It was no longer a question of defending the fatherland, nor of acquiring the "natural boundaries," nor of liberating fellow-creatures down-trodden by tyrants. It was to be a war of spoliation and of glory, instead of faith and principle. France was now fighting either for the glory of the Directors, or to pay her soldiers, or to distract attention from troubles at home. The age of Bonaparte had arrived.

By the end of 1795 all these circumstances had left their mark on the French army. The law of requisition had called out as recruits each year all men of the age of twenty; from that time the French army was in outward shape a national army. But the newly formed auxiliary legions from the Netherlands, Italy, and elsewhere tended to shatter those essentially national ideas which distinguished the army during the first years of the Revolution. Further, continuous service was causing the conscript and volunteer to merge his character in that of the mercenary soldier. Still the French soldier of that age never forgot his enthusiasm for his country, whether his country was represented to him by the Republic or by the Emperor. It was this burning enthusiasm working through a mass of trained veterans which made the French armies practically invincible. Yet, though the same spirit ran through the whole of the French troops, each individual army had its special traits.

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The Army of the Sambre and Meuse had the special note of self-sacrifice; in 1794 and 1795 it had to play a subordinate part to Pichegru, as later in 1796 and 1797 it was sacrificed to Moreau. The Army of the Rhine was the most patriotic and most completely devoted to the Republic. Under Moreau it was to become the best disciplined of all the French armies. The Army of Italy was noted for its bravery; but in it pillage had already laid the seeds of deterioration.

As regards the staff of the army the years 1792–5 had seen many changes. By 1795 the first type of general, the ambitious Royalists, the Dumouriez' and the Custines, had disappeared. The years 1794–5 were marked by a new type. The successful *sous-officiers* of the old *régime*, the ardent Republicans, the Hoches, the Pichegrus, or civilians like Moreau, had forced their way to the top. By the end of 1795 a yet newer type was developing. The future generals were no longer politicians, they were before all things soldiers. They loved their men; they loved their profession; above all they loved glory. They were intensely proud of their soldierly qualities; but they could not take orders from each other. They could only bow before immense military talents; they were in fact the men of Napoleon — Dessaix, Kléber, Ney, Soult, Lefebvre, Bernadotte, Macdonald, Gouvion-Saint-Cyr, Berthier, Augereau, Lannes, Murat, and Masséna.

A great change was also coming over the officers of the army as a mass. Up to 1795 promotion had been mainly by the election of the soldiers or the selection of the Representative on Mission. The officer had gained his training in the field. After 1795 promotion was still open from the ranks; but the Directory established new schools for officers. Cavalry schools were set up at Versailles, Lunéville, and Angers. The École Polytechnique and the Écoles d'Application for the engineers and artillery furnished officers for these special branches. The medical department was officered from the special military medical schools of Paris, Montpellier, and Strassburg.

The end of 1795 therefore marked an epoch in the history of the French army. Its inherent strength no longer consisted in the remnants of the old royal army, nor in the fierce devotion of its soldiers to the principles of the Revolution. But its power lay in the fact that it was now an army of enthusiastic soldiers trained by years of continuous warfare, and organised entirely with a view to war. In future it gained its victories, not because its opponents missed their opportunities and did not recognise their needs; nor because its enemies lacked cohesion, and were demoralised by jealousies; but because it possessed the highest military talent of the age; and because its strategy, its tactics, and its whole organisation, were in unison with the aims and objects of the people and the rulers or ruler of France.

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CHAPTER XV

THE NAVAL WAR

In the later years of the reign of Louis XVI great attention had been devoted by the French government to its Navy, and both the material and the *personnel* of that force had reached a high level of efficiency. The defects revealed in the American War had been as far as possible remedied. The insufficient supply of skilled officers and trained seamen-gunners, which in large measure explained the few reverses suffered by France in the course of that war, led to the introduction of changes in the method of recruiting and educating officers, and to the formation of a new corps of seamen-gunners, organised in nine divisions, each of 1700 men. The corps of officers, by an ordinance of 1786, was to consist of 100 captains, of whom 27 were to be commodores ; 100 "majors of vessels"; 680 lieutenants ; and 840 sub-lieutenants. To enter the corps of officers the cadet had to show proof of noble birth, but he received a long and carefully thought-out training, and was required to pass an examination before he was allowed to reach the rank of lieutenant. Youths of inferior station were permitted to enter the service as "volunteers," and from their numbers were chosen the greater part of the sub-lieutenants, but with the proviso that they could never rise higher than to lieutenant, and to that position only for some remarkable service. Thus on the eve of the Revolution the French navy was officered by men of noble birth, and the humbly born could never aspire to high rank. The field of choice was narrowed, and it was impossible for the son of middle-class parents to rise, though in the British navy at this period this was not only feasible but quite common.

The levelling tendencies of the Revolution made short work of all such restrictions in the French navy ; but at the same time the general revolt against authority in every form, which was one of the features of the revolutionary movement, broke down all discipline among the subordinate officers and seamen, and rendered the position of the senior officers so disagreeable that they resigned their commissions in hundreds.

At Brest trouble began in 1789, when an unpopular director of the port, a naval captain, had to be temporarily removed, because the dockyard

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workmen disliked him. There was an outbreak of anarchism; and the British ambassador in Paris gave information to the French authorities, who ridiculed the story, that he had been approached with a view to the destruction of the dockyard. As subsequently several incendiary attempts were made upon the yard, it is probable that there was more in this affair than the French authorities supposed. Similar disorders occurred at the other French naval ports; and at Toulon there was a serious mutiny which was treated with the most injudicious lenity. The people of the town and the seamen of the fleet were led to believe that it was safer to be on the side of disorder than on that of order, and they speedily profited by the lesson. At the end of the year there was a fresh outbreak at Toulon, directed against Comte d'Albert de Rions, then commanding the squadron in that port, and by general acknowledgment the ablest French naval commander of his day. He was attacked by a number of mutinous workmen in the dockyard, and through the cowardice and bad faith of the municipality and the National Guard was cruelly maltreated, and narrowly escaped with his life. He was finally imprisoned; but when the Constituent Assembly heard of his plight it ordered his release, though without blaming those who had failed to protect him. Far from being punished, his assailants were declared to have acted as patriots. De Rions was succeeded by an officer named de Glandèves, whose treatment was much the same. All through 1790 the disorders at Toulon continued, a captain narrowly escaping death in August at the hands of a mob. In 1792 Rear-Admiral de Flotte, then commanding the fleet at Toulon, was attacked, severely wounded, and hanged, while three captains were killed with him.

At Brest the state of affairs had also gone from bad to worse, because the government had not the courage to punish those whom it knew to be guilty of violence and sedition. The attempt to fit out a fleet in 1790, during the dispute between England and Spain regarding Nootka Sound, led to a serious outbreak in the Brest squadron. The men, when they learnt the details of the new penal code decreed by the Assembly, rose and assailed with abuse d'Albert de Rions, who after leaving Toulon had been appointed to the command; while in the town there were serious disturbances. The seamen who had been prominent in this affair received from the Assembly the most singular punishment conceivable. They were dismissed from the service and sent to their homes, which was probably exactly what they wanted, since hard work in the fleet, with no pay and little food, was not an entrancing prospect for anybody. As the result of this act of weakness further troubles followed; and down to the beginning of war with England there was incessant friction between the officers and men.

One of the first consequences of these troubles at Brest and Toulon was the emigration of no fewer than 600 officers, among whom was an unusual proportion of men of strong character, high principle, and

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professional capacity. The French National Assembly was thus confronted with a new and difficult problem: how to obtain or improvise officers in a profession which is peculiarly technical. It set to work to reorganise the navy according to its own preconceived ideas, disregarding the advice of naval officers of tried capacity; and the results of its handiwork were seen in every page of French naval history from the First of June to Trafalgar. It had previously caused confusion by introducing trial by jury afloat. In April, 1791, it sanctioned a law abolishing the old methods of recruiting and training officers, and opened commissions to all Frenchmen below the age of 20, after passing an examination. Those successful in this competition entered the navy and served for three years as "*aspirants*," after which they could claim their discharge. Any man who had served six years at sea, of which one was to be spent in a warship, could compete for the grade of ensign; and ensigns of more than eight years' sea service, two of which were to be in the navy, might be promoted to captain's rank; thus a merchant seaman, with but three years of training in a warship, might find himself in command of a ship of the line. Other decrees from time to time modified the conditions and rendered them less exacting; in fact, the Assembly endeavoured to fuse the professions of naval and merchant-marine officer. In October, 1793, the decree of "purification," which was caused by the surrender of Toulon to the English, appeared to complete the disorganisation of the fleet. This ordained that the various municipalities, in close relation with the seamen, should determine the "civism" of the officers and hear denunciations of them, after which all who were untrustworthy were to be replaced from candidates nominated by the local authorities. It was now possible for merchant officers to rise to the rank of flag officer with little or no naval training. An earlier and more disastrous measure was the abolition of the corps of seamen-gunners, and its replacement by a new corps of marine artillery, commanded by artillery officers from the army. The explanation of this surprising change was probably the Assembly's distrust of the "civism" of the seamen-gunners. But the abolition of the seamen-gunners deprived the French navy of its best shots just when they were most wanted, and introduced a discordant element into the ships' crews.

The flight or execution of the ablest senior officers left the navy of France without the experienced leaders who alone could have confronted the British admirals of that age with success. Such men as de Rions, Grimouard, Kersaint, and d'Estaing, could not easily be replaced. A low standard of professional capacity marked the French navy throughout the war of 1793; and there were few of those hard-fought actions which had characterised the American War, and in which victory generally went to the heavier battery. It was not a navy but a congeries of ships and men that France placed at sea. A consciousness of this fact led to such utterances as those of Jean Bon Saint-André, to the effect

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that the qualities required for victory at sea were enthusiasm, courage, and audacity. The same delusion reappears at wide intervals in different nations, so that Jean Bon cannot be accused of any superlative folly. On land, where grave disorganisation had been produced by the revolutionary changes in the French army, a disunited enemy had been encountered; and masses of men had been employed by the French against the handfuls furnished by the other European Powers. But at sea the conditions changed. Masses could not be utilised by France, for the simple reason that the ships into which to put them did not exist; and for the first time the French revolutionaries encountered men animated by a national feeling as strong as their own. In the effort to override skill, the organisers of the republican navy directed their captains to resort to boarding as far as possible, as it was too hastily assumed that the British must be deficient in courage, being slaves of the tyrant George III.

The complete anarchy on board French ships from the beginning of the Revolution placed the French fleet at a grave disadvantage in every battle against a disciplined foe. Even when face to face with the enemy the men at times refused to fight, and could never be trusted to obey. Instances of gross cowardice were not uncommon. Early in 1793, on a cruise of the Brest squadron, the *Tourville* was dismasted with the loss of her captain and twelve men. Thereupon her crew, in sheer fright, refused to work the ship. In the *Républicain*, while tacking, the foresails were carried away. Several attempts to get her round failed, owing to the inexperience of the officers and men, of whom only thirty could be induced by threats or promises to put in an appearance on deck. Even the officers were backward. In bad weather the seamen hid themselves below; according to the statement of a competent French officer all discipline had vanished, and it was impossible to trust the men either to navigate the ship or to fight her. In the East Indies the crews of the cruisers *Cybèle* and *Résolue*, when threatened by a British ship, declared they would only fight if attacked. The cowardice, ignorance, and inexperience of the officers and men were rendered even more disastrous by ignorance at headquarters. The instructions sent to the squadrons from Paris were often confused and contradictory. A good example of this is to be found in the orders given to Morard de Galles in 1793. He was directed at one and the same time, with one and the same fleet, to escort a convoy from San Domingo to France and to prevent the disembarkation of British troops on the Vendée coast. In the same way, vague and contradictory orders were given to the navy in 1796 on the eve of the expedition to Ireland. The Ministry of the Navy had a habit of forgetting that provisions did not last for ever, and that any French fleet which took the sea under republican discipline would speedily stand in need of repairs and refit, owing to the collisions which occurred whenever any attempt was made to practise fleet tactics, and

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owing to the loss of masts and spars whenever the wind blew with any force. Movements were prescribed, which the admirals, even had there been the best will on their part, could not possibly have executed. When the admirals failed, their patriotism was suspected. If they left inefficient ships behind them when they put to sea, they were accused of treason by the population of the naval ports; if they took the inefficient ships out, their movements were hampered at every turn; and when they regained port extensive repairs had to be executed, which brought the naval administration at Paris down upon them, with questions why they were not able to keep their fleets in good order.

The condition of the dockyards and of the *matériel* of the fleet was little better than that of the *personnel*. Louis XVI had maintained his fleet in good condition until the outbreak of the Revolution, and the ships were excellently built and designed. Herein they had at the outset a marked advantage over British ships of their own type. But the financial embarrassments of France and the disorder and incapacity of the revolutionary administration were responsible for a failure to provide stores and sails on the eve of war. The masts and spars were bad; the sails were of inferior canvas; the rigging was too often of old rope; the ironwork throughout the ships was defective in quality. In the later years of the war the ships were generally overladen with masts of excessive size and weight, and for this reason not only were they slower than British ships, thus losing all the advantage of good design in the hulls, but they were also incapable of being refitted at sea by the crews. Complaints as to the quality of the powder recur from time to time, while the clothing and provisions supplied were insufficient or poor in quality. Brest was speedily placed in a perilous position by the rising in the Vendée against the Republic, and was repeatedly in danger of actual starvation. Communication with the rest of France and with Paris was uncertain and slow. There was a want of money; and, since no one would furnish anything except for cash in consequence of the bad faith which the republican government showed to its creditors, resort was had to requisitions, with most unsatisfactory results.

The men needed for the manning of the fleet were raised from the seafaring population, or drawn from the army; and, as compulsion was employed, there should have been no want of good material. But so indifferently was the service administered that there was a perpetual lack of seamen, partly, no doubt, because of the superior attractions which privateers offered. The number of ships in the French fleet at the close of 1792 amounted to 246, of which 86 were of the line. Of these 13 were building and were not ready for sea, and only 27 were in commission. The battleships were thus distributed: 39 at Brest, 10 at Lorient, 13 at Rochefort, and 24 at Toulon. The frigates numbered 78. There were 47 corvettes and 35 gunboats and fireships. The French ship was superior to the British ship of her own class in weight of

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metal fired from long guns, while her projectiles were actually heavier, even when nominally of the same weight. The French seventy-four fired 990 lb., on her broadside, as against the British seventy-four's 972 or 790 lb., for the British seventy-fours were of several different types, each with a different battery. The 76 French ships of the line, which were available in early 1793, fired a total weight of metal on the broadside of 73,957 lb., from 6002 guns.

A Parliamentary Return shows that the British fleet in 1792 comprised 141 ships of the line, 157 frigates, and 136 smaller craft, or a grand total of 434 vessels. But of these a large number were in a dilapidated condition, and quite unfit to put to sea, while others again were on the stocks and incomplete. The ships of the line actually efficient at the opening of 1793 were 115, mounting a total of 8718 guns, and firing on the broadside 88,957 lb. of metal, which gave the British battle-squadron an advantage of about 20 per cent. in weight of metal as against the French. The number of seamen voted in 1792 was but 16,000, of whom 4425 were marines. The marines were employed at this date and throughout the war not only as small-arms men and for landing parties, but also as a kind of naval police, to hold the seamen down and to support the officers. They were berthed aft, close to the officers' quarters, and rarely took the part of the seamen. On occasions they were replaced by soldiers, who had a share in several of the important engagements of the war. The number of men borne had been 39,526 in 1790, the year of the Nootka Sound armament, when war with Spain seemed probable; but from this it had been shortsightedly reduced to 34,097 in 1791 and to 16,000 in 1792. The amount voted in 1792 was only £1,985,482. As war drew nearer, in December, 1792, an additional 9000 men, 1000 of whom were to be marines, were voted by Parliament; but the mobilisation of the whole fleet at that date would have demanded at least 100,000 men, so that this addition was quite insufficient. By 1799 the total borne was 120,409.

For the expansion of the fleet from its peace to its war strength, time was required. The men wanted were obtained in several ways. Voluntary enlistments, generally with a bounty, supplied a considerable part of the force. Recourse was also had to the press, to which all seamen were liable. They were taken forcibly, by gangs of armed men, acting under the direction of an officer, from the British seaports, or even from British merchant ships at sea. Nominally landsmen were exempt from this burden, but in practice they were often swept off. Moreover, many foreigners and Americans were engaged; and, when all these expedients failed to supply the number of men needed, an Act was passed in 1795, requiring of the various counties quotas of men, according to the population, the number ranging from 23 in the case of Rutland, to 1081 in the case of Yorkshire. A few weeks later this

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was followed by another Act requiring the various ports to supply quotas of men. The total demanded under these two Acts was 30,000, and in many cases the men thus obtained seem to have possessed a good education.

As a last resource there remained the compulsory enlistment of minor criminals. Smugglers, thieves, and turbulent characters generally, were sent on board to relieve the country of the cost of their maintenance in prison. When the political troubles in Ireland began, an infusion of members of secret societies and United Irishmen was added. The material with which the British officer had to work was thus unpromising; and the British fleet had here no advantage as against the French navy, for there was a deep sense of injustice among the British seamen, which found violent expression later, that they were deprived of liberty and compelled to fight for the stay-at-homes. "Whilst landsmen wander uncontrold, And boast the rites of freedom, Oh view the tender's loathsome hole [hold] Where droops your injured seamen," runs a "seditious" song seized in the Nore mutiny. It proceeds to protest that it is "shame to boast your tars' exploits Then damn those tars to slavery." It has been justly remarked that nothing gives a better idea of the capacity of the British officer than the fact that such material was reduced to order and loyalty, in the face of injustice so great and of a general disregard of the seamen's interests by Parliament. It should also be noted that there were no such repeated murderous disorders as occurred in the French navy; and that, when under serious provocation the men did rise in mutiny, they displayed a remarkable measure of self-restraint, and refused to open communications with the enemy, the only exceptions to this general rule being one or two outbreaks where the Irish element was powerful. The fact that such officers as Duncan and Patton in 1796 and 1797 were drawing the Admiralty's attention to the need for reform shows that the seamen had real and deep grievances.

Their treatment in the service was bad. While allowance must always be made for the peculiar necessities of war, they were yet subject to much ill-usage at the hands of the officers. Warrant officers carried rattan canes with which to "start" the men, as it was called; and captains could inflict up to 48 lashes of the cat-o'-nine-tails without any right of appeal. Courts-martial inflicted sentences of as many as 500 lashes, which virtually meant that the culprit was killed with torture. The pay was low and generally in arrears; the food was not good, though there had been a sensible improvement since the days of the American War; the share of prize-money accorded to the seaman was small, and by the chicanery of the Admiralty Courts was usually withheld for years. As a general rule, leave was refused to the crews when in port for fear of desertion; and the married men rarely or never saw their wives and families. The sick and wounded were neglected; the maimed in battle

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were turned adrift to starve or beg. On the other hand the capable among the men of the lower deck had better prospects of promotion than in the reformed and reorganised navy of the present day. The officers were not then drawn from a limited class; any seaman with capacity and courage might rise. There was, it is true, a tendency to confine high promotion to men of birth and rank; yet several of the great officers of this period were humbly born. Among the famous "band of brothers" who won such glory in the campaign of the Nile were men who would have been excluded under the present nomination system. Parker, the leader of the Nore mutiny, had been a midshipman, and had been reduced to the ranks. There was a practice of interchange between the officers of the British navy and merchant service which may explain certain measures of the French Assembly.

As a general rule the British officers were men of high character and great capacity, animated with a spirit of zeal for the service, trained in the American War, and professionally unmatched in any navy which has ever existed. The officers in the senior ranks had attained to great reputation and acquired experience in the handling of ships in the junior ranks. The perpetual change between the merchant service and the navy, and the elastic system of education and entry, prevented any such stereotyping of ideas or development of formalism as has undoubtedly accompanied the growth of most modern navies.

Among the officers were an unusual number of men of genius. Head and shoulders above all others was Nelson, at the date of the opening of the war a senior captain, but only 34 years of age, and in the very prime of manhood. Contemporaries of his, all of great capacity and merit, were Collingwood, Cornwallis, Saumarez, Pellew, and Troubridge. Among the senior officers were three great men, Lord Hood, Adam Duncan, and Sir John Jervis, soon to be better known as Lord St Vincent. Lord Howe was an able officer, but was at this date too old for hard work at sea, though he was unusually popular with the men. Where the French could find no capable admirals, the British nation had a dozen at its call; and this fact brought victory despite the mismanagement of statesmen, the indifferent strategy of the Admiralty, and the defective administration of the ports and dockyards, where corruption was rampant.

The British navy had thus a great advantage as against the French in the possession of experienced commanders — and in war, as Napoleon has said, "men are nothing, a man is everything" — while its admirals' actions were usually inspired by sound ideas of strategy. Two principles which spell success in war are to be found in the plans of Nelson. The first was the principle of the annihilation of the armed forces of the enemy. Not the mere winning of battles, the capture of some few prizes, but the complete destruction of the hostile fleets was his aim; and he counted no victory as worthy unless this object were attained. His regret after the

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Nile at the fact that some shattered fragments of the French fleet had escaped his forces is the truest indication of his greatness as a naval officer, since the commander must be judged by the manner in which he uses his victories. This same principle of the complete annihilation of the enemy had been grasped by Drake; but it was novel in the eighteenth century, until the rise of Napoleon, who put it into practice in warfare on land. The germ of it was contained in the Admiralty instructions which directed British commanders to "take, burn, and sink" the enemy; but by no one was it practised at sea with such energy and remorselessness as by Nelson. Unlike Howe, Bridport, and Colpoys, he was indifferent to the damage or loss which his ships sustained in carrying out this principle, though as a prudent leader he always endeavoured in framing his plans to obtain the result desired with the minimum expenditure of blood and material. The second principle in which he shone above the seamen and soldiers of his own day was in his encouragement of initiative in his officers. Thus he led into battle men trained to reason, with the result that in each of his battles the subordinates at critical moments displayed the invaluable quality of asking, not what they were ordered to do, but what action the spirit of the orders required to attain success. The orders issued by Nelson were clear and complete, but they were not paralysing; they did not go into detail; they were "directives," not formulas to be mechanically obeyed. His success was thus due to science and a correct comprehension of the unchanging principles of war.

As the strategy of Nelson, which is typical of the best in the British navy, was good, so also were his tactics inspired by deep reflexion and accurate judgment. His dominating idea in action was to crush a part of the enemy's force by superior numbers. This idea he applied in all his battles with the single exception of Copenhagen, where, however, he may have considered that the gunnery preponderance of his fleet was sufficient for his purposes, without any attempt to concentrate superior numbers against the Danes. He disdained precedents, and never paid any attention to the old tactical idea, which was that when two fleets joined battle they should form into two lines and engage ship to ship, with the natural consequence that, if force was evenly distributed on the two sides, no decisive result followed. It would seem that his ideas were inherited from Hood, who had wished to put them into practice in the American War and in Golfe Jouan in 1794.

The unpreparedness of the British navy at the outset led the Admiralty to adopt a policy of merely watching the enemy; but gradually, as the navy grew in numbers and training, this strategy was replaced by determined attack. The forces of the French were to be brought to battle and destroyed. When those forces would not fight, but remained in port, as it was found dangerous to leave them unmasked, the policy of blockading the hostile ports was adopted, but only after long delay and

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late in the war, since a thoroughly efficient navy was requisite for its execution. At the beginning of the war the weakness of the British navy and the large force required to protect British shipping prevented decisive action when the French fleet was in a hopeless state of disorganisation, though a series of great naval victories or a close blockade of the French ports in 1793–4 would have speedily terminated the struggle by reducing France to starvation.

In the earlier years of the war the British navy had the support of numerous allies, since the Spanish, the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the Neapolitan navies were all acting in co-operation against France. The Spanish navy, however, at this date was no longer a serious force; the ships were good, but the equipment and the crews were beneath contempt. The same might be said of the Neapolitan navy, while the Dutch fleet was too weak to weigh heavily in the scale. Portugal added six ships of the line and four frigates to the Coalition; and these were of some value as they were officered in part by Englishmen. The Spanish navy consisted of 76 ships of the line, of which 56 were in commission, while the frigates and cruisers numbered 128. They gave at least an appearance of strength. The Neapolitan navy mustered four battleships, a few frigates, and a large number of small gunboats. The Dutch navy consisted of 49 ships of the line, of small size and inferior condition, but useful in shallow water, with 60 smaller craft. Thus the total strength of the Coalition was about 210 effective ships of the line, outnumbering the French by three to one, but devoid of unity of control and command, and lacking sympathy in ideas and aims.

The naval war in its earlier stages falls geographically into two campaigns, the northern in the Atlantic and the Channel, the southern in the Mediterranean, while outside Europe operations of minor importance were directed by England against the French colonies. The Mediterranean campaign will be treated first.

In the summer of 1792 the French government ordered the concentration of a squadron in the Mediterranean to co-operate with the French army in the war against Sardinia. This squadron of nine battleships under Rear-Admiral Truguet captured Oneglia in October. The next operation was an attack upon Sardinia with 5000 troops, in which Napoleon Bonaparte took part. On the night of February 15, 1793, in an attempt on Cagliari, the troops were seized with panic and fled, declaring that they were betrayed by their officers, whom they threatened to hang. At Maddalena there was a not less discreditable failure, owing to the cowardice of the seamen and the troops. Bonaparte himself, when he returned to Bonifacio, was assailed by the crews with cries of "Hang the aristocrat." This expedition, though of small military importance, illustrates the difficulties which beset French commanders. After these operations the French fleet returned to Toulon and there

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remained in port, as the outbreak of war with England and Spain left it in a position of dangerous weakness.

When war was declared, the British fleet in the Mediterranean was composed of small craft without a single ship of the line; and there was great delay in the despatch of reinforcements from England. Not until June were 19 vessels of the line concentrated in the Mediterranean under Vice-Admiral Lord Hood. In July, having received further reinforcements, Hood appeared before Toulon with 21 ships of the line to blockade the 17 French sail, which were known to be ready in the port. Some weeks later, on August 22, two French commissioners came off to his flag-ship, claiming to represent the Sections of Marseilles, and proposed to him an alliance, the object of which was to be the re-establishment of the French monarchy. Hood required that the port and fortress of Toulon should be placed in his hands, and that the French squadron there should be put out of commission and handed over to him, to be restored to France on the conclusion of peace. The Toulonnais, in danger of starvation if the British blockaded the coast, acceded to his proposals; and, early in the morning of August 28, British seamen occupied the forts at the entrance to the harbour, while in the course of the same day the British fleet entered the port. The French ships offered no resistance, though there was great fermentation among the crews. Admiral Trogoff, who commanded the French squadron, was in sympathy with the anti-revolutionary party, and ordered other French vessels at various points on the southern coast to move to Toulon and there surrender; but in this he was not obeyed.

Just when possession had been gained of the place, the British fleet was joined by 17 Spanish sail of the line under Admiral Langara. Subsequently the Neapolitan fleet arrived with a small force of troops; and these again were followed by various Sardinian detachments. But the presence of so many nationalities with varying aims and each jealous of the other, and the divided command, militated against the successful defence of the place. No large British expeditionary force was available, though Nelson had very judiciously remarked a week before the surrender that a great fleet was useless off the Toulon coast without troops. The revolutionary government at once took steps to recapture the port and concentrated a strong force against it. If the quality of the French troops was bad, the unity of direction compensated for faults of equipment and discipline. The French formed the siege of the town on the land side, while day by day they received reinforcements which enabled them to attack vigorously. On the other side, the allies were backward in sending troops, and Hood dared not deplete his ships of seamen. He was indeed obliged to send to Malta for 1500 Maltese seamen to replace the men he had landed. In December the French, directed by Bonaparte, stormed Fort Mulgrave, which commanded the entrance to the harbour. It was evident that the defence of the port could not be much

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prolonged, and the various allied commanders met in a council of war to decide upon the course to be taken.

At this council it was decided that Toulon should be evacuated, that the inhabitants should be removed, provided they wished to leave the place, that the French ships of war should either be withdrawn or destroyed, and that steps should be taken to put these measures into execution that same night (December 17). Langara promised to undertake the destruction of the French ships in the inner harbour; the British undertook to attend to those elsewhere. On the 18th the troops, where they did not retire precipitately of their own accord, were withdrawn from the advanced positions, ready to embark; and the Republican army closed in upon the doomed town. The Spaniards, however, whether from deliberate treachery, of which they have been accused by some British authorities, or from the difficulty of their task and the incompetence of their officers, which are more probable explanations, failed to complete their work of destruction; and the British, badly seconded by them, were unable to burn all the French ships. In all only 9 ships of the line were thoroughly destroyed, and 4 more were brought away by the British, leaving the enemy 14 efficient ships at Toulon; 4 had previously been sent away with French seamen of the Republican party to Brest. Thus, of 31 ships of the line which Toulon had contained, 18 were saved to France, and 13 ships of the line with 9 frigates lost, still further reducing the strength of the French fleet. Nelson, early during the occupation of the place, had urged the removal of all the French warships; but this measure could not be carried out because of the opposition of the Spaniards and the want of crews to navigate so large a fleet. On the recapture of Toulon, which took place on December 19, most of the anti-revolutionary party among the inhabitants were massacred, though nearly 15,000 men, women, and children had escaped in the allied fleet.

During the defence of Toulon a small British squadron had been detached to blockade Corsica; and early in 1794 a British force disembarked on that island. Mainly through the efforts of Captain Nelson, Bastia was taken on May 22, and on August 10 Calvi capitulated. The island passed under the influence of England. Meantime at Toulon the French authorities exerted themselves to the utmost to repair the damage which had been done to their ships, and to equip a squadron capable of acting against the British. They were so far successful that in June, 1794, a squadron of seven sail of the line under Rear-Admiral Martin put to sea with orders to cruise along the coast, for the purpose of training the crews. Hood, who was off Corsica, at once proceeded in chase of the French with thirteen ships and drove them into Golfe Jouan, where he intended to attack them, but was prevented from carrying out his purpose by bad weather and the strength of the French batteries ashore. The French fleet returned to Toulon, and there remained while

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its *personnel* melted away. Complete disorder reigned in the harbour; the crews, having no stomach for fighting without pay and with but little food, not unnaturally deserted, till at the opening of 1795 there were but 2724 seamen left. This remnant of a great fleet, however, was speedily reinforced, since, owing to the bad dispositions of the British Admiralty and the ineffective watch kept upon the forces at Brest, the French were able to send six ships of the line from Brest to Toulon without molestation.

The situation of the British fleet in the Mediterranean now became critical. Hood in vain pleaded with the Admiralty for reinforcements and more attention to his material needs; but his letters were disregarded, and finally he received an order from London to strike his flag. His successor was the feeble Vice-Admiral Hotham. The fleet continued in a wretched condition; the men were mutinous, and a serious outbreak occurred in the *Windsor Castle*. Her crew assembled on the lower deck, demanding the removal of certain officers, which was granted them. The ships were ill supplied with provisions and stores, and there was a shortage of 1400 men among the complements.

On March 3, 1795, Admiral Martin put to sea from Toulon with fifteen ships of the line, having received orders to essay an attack on Corsica, for which purpose he had embarked 6000 troops on board. His crews were made up in great part of soldiers and landsmen; most of his gunners were untrained; and the state of discipline was still miserable. He might have been expected to fall an easy victim to the British fleet, which sighted him on March 12, fourteen ships strong. Hotham, however, did not order an instant attack; and next day, when he signalled a general chase, the only ship that seriously attacked the French was Nelson's *Agamemnon*. She assailed the French ship of the line, the *Ça Ira*, which had lost two topmasts through a collision; but as she received no support from Hotham, and was indeed ordered by signal to rejoin the bulk of the British fleet, her enemy escaped for the day. On the 14th the *Ça Ira*, with another vessel which had her in tow, was cut off and captured. The remainder of the French retired. Hotham failed to profit by his subordinate's energy, though Nelson went on board the flagship and did his best to induce the admiral to follow up the success. "We must be contented; we have done very well," was Hotham's remark, in a phrase which has become historic. Thus was one of the greatest opportunities in British naval history flung away, by a commander whose appointment was one of the gravest blunders committed during the war. The half-hearted, scrambling, indecisive action showed how inefficient even the British fleet could be under an indifferent leader, and showed also what credit is due to Nelson, St Vincent, and Duncan for their victories.

Though the complaints of the fleet were bitter, Hotham remained in command, and lost a second opportunity on July 13 of the same year.

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The Admiralty had now sent out reinforcements; for, after Hood had been driven from the command, it was found that he had been perfectly reasonable and judicious in his request for more ships and in his appreciation of the situation. But with twenty-three British ships against seventeen French Hotham once more hesitated to attack. When he did close his onset was half-hearted, and only resulted in the destruction of a single French ship. Allowing for the defective condition of the French vessels and their want of trained seamen, it would be difficult to discover a worse performance on the part of the British navy than these two battles. The failure of the British to achieve a decisive victory in the Mediterranean had disastrous results, as it facilitated the conquest of Italy by the French and so led to the rise of Napoleon. It was indeed fortunate for British interests that in November, 1795, Hotham was replaced by Vice-Admiral Sir John Jervis. Yet the change was not made because of any perception in London that Hotham was a complete failure; on the contrary, there is evidence to prove that he was still considered "well qualified to command," and that the weakness of his health was the only cause of his supersession.

On the arrival of Jervis steps were at once taken to improve the discipline of the fleet, which had fallen to a low ebb; officers were sharply directed to attend to their professional duty; constant exercise with the great guns was enjoined; fleet tactics and station keeping received great attention. At the same time Jervis showed the able officers of his squadron, men such as Nelson and Troubridge, that his eye was upon them; he gave them every scope for action and was liberal of praise. Under this skilled direction the *moral* of the fleet rose rapidly, and a close and efficient blockade of Toulon was maintained; while Nelson was detached from the main body of the fleet to annoy the French and to blockade the coast of northern Italy. With insufficient force and without the numerous small craft required for such work he was not, however, able to interfere seriously with their communications.

In the course of the summer of 1796 the French successes in Italy and the growing hostility of Spain augmented the difficulties of the British fleet. Jervis had obtained his supplies from the Italian coast; and, when that fell under the influence of the French, it was not easy to keep his crews in good health. In August, 1796, the Spanish government concluded the Treaty of San Ildefonso with the French government, and became the ally of France. Placed geographically as Spain was upon the line of communication of the British fleet, the difficulty of maintaining that line was now much increased, though little military danger was to be apprehended from the ill-manned squadrons of the Spaniards. The Spanish fleet at once escorted clear of the Mediterranean a French squadron, which had been lying at Cadiz blockaded by a British division under Admiral Man. Man was ordered by Jervis to join him off the Corsican coast; but he did so without taking in provisions at

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Gibraltar, and had no sooner met Jervis than he was compelled to go back to obtain supplies. He returned to Gibraltar, was chased by the Spaniards on the way, lost nerve, and sailed off home, instead of rejoining Jervis. His conduct met with no adequate punishment; for, though he was ordered to strike his flag and was never again employed afloat, he was soon after made one of the Naval Lords of the Admiralty, and employed in directing the strategy of the fleet which his weakness had so gravely imperilled.

As it was, the Spaniards with twenty-six sail moved to Toulon, though they ought to have been strong enough with proper handling to have beaten Jervis, who was greatly inferior in ships of the line. At Toulon they were joined by twelve French sail of the line, raising their total force to thirty-eight battleships and a large number of frigates. Jervis, in the face of such odds, had no course before him but retreat. He evacuated Corsica, and with his whole fleet and a large convoy of merchantmen reached Gibraltar in safety in December, 1796. Not for eighteen months did the British navy show itself in force in the Mediterranean, which was thus, owing to the behaviour of Man, given over to the enemy. The abandonment of the Mediterranean left Italy at the mercy of France, and led every ally of England to distrust her. The strategy that permitted such weakness on so vital a station was thoroughly defective; for at this date England had upon paper 160 ships of the line, which should have given her a marked advantage against France, Holland, and Spain combined, at any point, while the number of men borne in the fleet in the year 1796 was no fewer than 112,382.

It was now the turn of the French and Spaniards to throw away their opportunities. For some weeks they had Jervis at their mercy, but they did nothing. Early in 1797 Jervis moved northwards from Gibraltar, after many minor mishaps to his fleet, escorted a convoy on its way to Brazil, and then received reinforcements, which brought up his strength to fifteen sail of the line. With this force, late on February 13, he sighted a Spanish fleet, twenty-five ships of the line strong, off Cape St Vincent, on its way round from the Mediterranean to Cadiz, but blown by the strong gales far to the west of its destination. The enemy were under Admiral Don José de Cordova, an officer of excellent reputation. They had chased Nelson, who was on his way back from a mission to the Mediterranean to remove the naval depot at Elba. He rejoined Jervis' fleet in the afternoon of the 13th; and Jervis signalled to his squadron to clear for action.

At dawn of the 14th the British fleet formed in two columns; and, as the morning mist lifted off the sea, the Spanish fleet came into view to the south. The wind blew from the west. Though the Spaniards were clearly in superior force, Jervis resolved to attack, and bore down upon them, still in two columns. The Spanish fleet was in great disorder, nineteen ships in one group, to windward, and a smaller group of six

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ships to leeward, endeavouring to join the main body. Jervis' tactics were to cut in between the two groups with his fleet and attempt to overpower the larger. Just before 11 a.m. the signal was made for the British ships to form in single line ahead. The *Culloden* led the van, and as she neared the gap in the enemy's line which had just been crossed by three Spanish ships, found a fourth in her way. But Troubridge, her captain, would not draw back, and with the words "Let the weakest fend off," held on his course. The Spaniard yielded before him; he broke the line about noon, as he passed through the gap in it, pouring two double-shotted broadsides into the enemy with such precision that it was said afterwards they had been fired "as if by a seconds' watch, and in the silence of a port-admiral's inspection."

The two portions of the Spanish fleet were thus separated by the interposition of the British line moving southwards, and it now remained to reap the fruits of this manœuvre, by concentrating on a part of their force. Just as the *Culloden* broke through the enemy, Jervis made the signal to his ships to tack or turn in succession northwards, so that the van ships in the British line after passing through the gap might renew the encounter with the main body of the enemy. At this signal Troubridge gave a second proof of his seamanly judgment, for just as the flaghoist floated to the yards of the *Victory*, the *Culloden* repeated the signal, showing that she had it ready and was waiting for it. She tacked so sharply that Jervis cried in delight, "Look at Troubridge there! He tacks his ship to battle as if the eyes of all England were upon him." Behind him the ships of the fleet followed his example, exchanging fire meantime with the Spaniards. The British fleet was now in the midst of the turn, in a line V-shaped, with the main body of the Spaniards passing eastwards above the left arm of the V, so that there was risk of their effecting a junction with the smaller body. At this juncture Nelson, whose ship, the *Captain*, was last but two in the British line near the head of the right arm of the V, and whose turn to tack and move north would not have come for some minutes, saw what ought to be done, and did it without awaiting any signals, thereby giving proof of an initiative as necessary in the subordinate as it is rare. He wore his ship, turned out of the line, and flung himself boldly upon the leader of the Spanish fleet. It was an act of extraordinary judgment and independence, for at that date initiative in the junior officer was not always kindly viewed by his superiors; captains and admirals had been cashiered or reprimanded for breaking from the line of battle. But Nelson knew exactly the kind of enemy with which he had to deal; years before, his observant eye had noted that it took the Spaniards about twenty-four hours to form line of battle. His conduct made the engagement decisive; without it the battle of St Vincent would have brought no prizes, though the credit of confronting with success a far superior fleet would still have remained to Jervis.

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Nelson's onslaught on the Spanish fleet threw the enemy into complete confusion — a confusion so great that one of the vessels he attacked was found after her capture to have the tompions still in the muzzles of several of her guns — conclusive proof that these had never been cleared for action or discharged. He closed, and in succession fired into the *Santisima Trinidad*, on which the white flag is said to have been hoisted, but which afterwards escaped; into the *San Josef*, the *Salvador del Mundo*, and the *San Nicolas*. Most of these vessels were of double his weight of broadside; and, but for the fact that he had perfectly gauged the quality of his opponents, he might have been charged with criminal rashness. For some instants, too, he was left unsupported. His action was so bold and unprecedented that it may well have taken the ships astern of him by surprise. Collingwood, his lifelong friend, followed him speedily, and the *Culloden* and *Blenheim* also came quickly to his aid, and not before it was time, as the masts of the *Captain* were already shot away or tottering, and the rapidity of her fire had been reduced, owing to the exhaustion of the ammunition which had been collected on deck before the opening of the battle. The Spaniards were driven back, and compelled to abandon their intention of effecting a junction with the smaller body of their fleet. Collingwood forced the *Salvador del Mundo* to strike, but without troubling to take possession of her, attacked another enemy, the *San Ysidro*, and brought down her flag. Nelson meanwhile drove his shattered *Captain* upon the *San Nicolas*, boarded her, and with brilliant dash captured her; then, passing from her to the *San Josef*, which was entangled with her, carried that ship too, assisted by the fire which the *Prince George* was pouring into her.

About this point the battle was broken off by Jervis. He directed his fleet to prepare to bring to and cover the four prizes taken. The enemy were still left with 23 ships of the line, many of which had not been engaged, and two of which had arrived during the battle, so that, had the Spanish admiral shown energy, or had his crews been capable of making an effort, the case was by no means hopeless. Of the British fleet five were severely cut up, and would have fought at a great disadvantage. But the Spaniards made no attempt to renew the action; and the British formed a close line-ahead, secured the prizes, set to work to refit them, for they had been dismasted in the conflict, and remained all night in this posture, repairing damage. At daybreak of the 15th the two fleets were still in presence of one another; and, according to Spanish authorities, Cordova offered battle, which was declined by Jervis. This is probable, for Jervis had not attained to the ideal "not victory but annihilation," and he perhaps thought in Hotham's phrase that he had "done very well." But the battle had proved the utter incapacity of the Spanish navy and had shown that little was to be feared from its ships, whatever their numbers. The

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British admiral, too, must have learned, if he had cared to make enquiry from the prisoners, that the greater part of the Spanish crews were landsmen, who fought against their will, who wept when ordered aloft, and declared that they would prefer to be killed on the spot rather than face a horrible death in so perilous a service as handling the sails. When the Spanish admiral saw that the English were unwilling to fight he did not persist in forcing battle upon them, but edged off and returned to harbour. He was dismissed from the Spanish navy for his feeble conduct, declared incapable of again holding any command, and interdicted from residing in the capital or in any of the great naval ports of Spain.

The British loss in the battle was 73 killed and 227 severely wounded, the *Captain*, *Culloden*, *Blenheim*, and *Excellent* suffering most. The Spanish loss is not accurately known, but must have been considerable, as 603 men were killed or wounded in the four ships captured. The forces opposed at the beginning of the action were 15 British ships of 13,100 lbs. broadside to 25 Spanish of 19,980.

The credit for the victory rests in large measure with Nelson, for Jervis does not appear to have had any clear idea of what he intended to do; and, had his orders been rigidly executed, the result must have been quite indecisive. In its moral effects the success was of great importance. The news of it reached England at a moment of acute depression, when the cry for peace was being raised and when specie payment had been suspended. Though there was no mention whatever of Nelson's conduct in the official despatch, his name was in every mouth. So competent a judge as Hood declared that he had immortalised himself, while the press complained that he exposed himself too much, showing that the nation had already come to hold his life a precious one. Jervis received a peerage, with the title of Earl St Vincent; Nelson the order of the Bath; some days before the news reached England he had been promoted in the ordinary routine to Rear-Admiral.

The British fleet followed up its victory, as soon as repairs had been made, by blockading Cadiz, and was thus engaged when the mutinous movement in the navy, which had begun in England during March, reached it. St Vincent repressed all signs of disaffection with extreme vigour and severity, and there was no serious trouble; but in the boat encounters with the Spaniards it was noted that the men hung back, and did not fight with alacrity, though St Vincent attributed their misbehaviour in part to the "base cowardice" of the officers in charge. Be this as it may, the results came near disaster, as Nelson on one occasion was badly supported and was in consequence all but taken by the enemy. Nelson was next employed in a *coup de main* against the Spanish island of Teneriffe; but there, on July 24–5, he met with a severe repulse, losing 251 men killed, drowned and wounded, and himself receiving a dangerous wound, as the result of which his right arm had

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to be amputated, and he was compelled to return to England. St Vincent meantime maintained with energy the blockade of Cadiz. The net result of the campaign in the south up to the opening of 1798 was that the British had been forced from the Mediterranean, had been unable to inflict a crushing defeat upon either the French or Spanish forces in the south, and had been compelled to leave the French squadron at Toulon unwatched.

In the north of Europe, down to the beginning of 1797, no decisive victory was achieved by the British, and French squadrons moved backwards and forwards in the Atlantic without any great difficulty, convoying vessels from the French West Indies and covering the coasting traffic. In July, 1793, Admiral Lord Howe was despatched with a fleet of fifteen ships of the line, afterwards raised to seventeen, to watch the French fleet under Morard de Galles, which was cruising in the Bay of Biscay, about seventeen sail of the line strong. Howe sighted this fleet near Belleisle on July 31, and was in its presence for two days; but the weather was unfavourable, his ships were slower than the French, and he could not bring on an engagement. On his part, Morard de Galles had so much trouble with his crews that he did not think of fighting, though on paper his fleet was stronger than Howe's; and he was compelled, in part by want of supplies and sickness among his men, in part by an insurrectionary movement among the crews when they learned of the occurrences at Toulon, to return from Quiberon, where he had put in for supplies, to Brest. The men pretended to think, or, perhaps, really believed, that his object in taking the fleet to sea was to deliver it to the British.

The strength of the French squadron had now risen to 21 ships, but of these only four obeyed the admiral; five obeyed at times, and the other twelve were openly mutinous. The conduct of the men filled the Committee of Public Safety with rage, for, though the revolutionists had begun by destroying all discipline, they were now discovering the untoward consequences of such a policy. Four commissioners, of whom the most famous was Jean Bon Saint-André, were despatched to Brest to re-establish order. Their first proceeding was to put to death, after trial before a revolutionary tribunal, many French officers and seamen of republican sympathies who had been sent round by the British from Toulon, where their presence was dangerous, as they could not be induced to espouse the cause of the Bourbons. The next step was to remove Morard de Galles, who was a competent if not a brilliant officer, and who had distinguished himself in the most glorious days of the French navy, under Suffren. He was reproached with failure to repress the insubordination of the men, though it was the Republican government which had destroyed discipline, by allowing disorder among the men to pass unpunished and by failing to support officer after officer who had conscientiously striven to recall the crews to their sense of duty.

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Rear-Admirals Le Large, Landais, and Kerguelen, with whom there was no serious fault to be found, and a number of captains, who appear to have been among the best officers in the fleet, were removed from their ships, and in some cases sent before the revolutionary tribunals and put to death.

The whole fleet having thus been thrown into fresh confusion and deprived of the officers who had been acquiring experience under Morard de Galles, it remained to find new leaders. Four new admirals were appointed; a junior captain, Villaret-Joyeuse, was promoted Rear-Admiral and Commander-in-chief, under the delegate Jean Bon, who virtually had arrogated to himself the command; three other junior captains, Martin Cornic, and Vanstabel, were made Rear-Admirals. Before this reorganisation was complete a force of six ships of the line was sent under Vanstabel from Brest to intercept a squadron, which, the French government learned, was proceeding from England to Toulon, with a large convoy of troop- and store-ships. The information proved inaccurate, but Vanstabel was able to effect the capture of a part of another important British convoy, on its way home from Newfoundland, thus inflicting considerable loss upon the British. Less satisfactory from the French standpoint was the return to Brest at the close of the year of Rear-Admiral Sercey, who had been sent to the West Indies on the outbreak of war, to escort home French shipping in that quarter of the world, but had been compelled to return with his mission unfulfilled, owing to delays caused by the civil war which had broken out in San Domingo and the mutinous conduct of his crews. It was due to the remissness and unpreparedness of the British that he was able to recross the Atlantic unmolested, for the state of discipline in his ships was such that no dependence could be placed on his seamen. A close blockade of the French ports by the British would have been the surest method of preventing the French fleet from acquiring experience at sea, covering the importation of supplies, and attacking British commerce.

During the early months of 1794 the attention of the French government was concentrated upon the safe arrival of a great convoy, laden with provisions, which had been freighted by the French Minister in the United States. Owing to the anarchy caused by revolutionary measures, cultivation of the land had greatly diminished throughout France, and a large part of the population was in danger of starvation. To protect the passage of this convoy Vanstabel was sent from Brest at the close of 1793 with a division of battleships. The British navy ought to have strained every nerve to intercept the French, and the surest method of stopping them was to cruise off the French ports in strength. But this was what Howe did not care to do; he was cautious, advanced in years, and sincerely convinced that any fleet which blockaded must rapidly deteriorate in material and *moral*. His great object, says his biographer, was "to save the wear and tear of his ships"

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and not to destroy the enemy. His policy caused much discontent in England, and the press of the day attacked him bitterly, nor, it would seem, without justice. It is, however, only fair to add that in 1794 he was hampered by orders to escort several convoys.

Howe put to sea early in May, 1794, with 32 ships of the line and 15 smaller craft, having in his charge the convoys. When he had escorted them to the Lizard he divided his force; with 26 battleships he cruised off Brest, awaiting the arrival of the French convoy, of whose movements he had received information, while he sent six ships under Admiral Montagu to take the convoys to the Spanish coast. He cannot have watched Brest closely, for while he was to the west of Ushant a fleet of 26 French sail of the line slipped past him from that harbour, under the command of Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse. The French were in some degree favoured by fogs; but, had the British cruisers been more alert or the dispositions better studied, so large a force could never have evaded Howe. News of what had happened reached him through an American vessel; and so completely did he lose touch of his enemy that for a week he hunted for them in vain. On May 25, however, two cruisers of the French fleet were seen, chased, and captured; and moving north-east, to the quarter from which they had appeared, on May 28 he saw a large fleet. The sea was rough, and a strong wind was blowing from the south-south-west. Howe at once ordered his ships to prepare for battle and closed upon the enemy in two divisions, with a flying squadron of four ships, which had orders to attack the French rear.

The French formed line of battle, but badly and slowly. Having no desire to accept an action and leave Howe in the path of the convoy, they made sail to draw the British away to the south-east. Howe fell into the trap and pursued. A scrambling action followed between the leading British ships and the sternmost of the French, but neither side inflicted any disabling injury upon the other. The French *Révolutionnaire* and the British *Audacious* dropped away from their respective fleets; and the *Révolutionnaire* might have been captured. As three British ships were standing after her and pressing her closely, Howe signalled to them to abandon the pursuit and rejoin the fleet, forming order of battle in line-ahead. Owing to defects in the code of night signals he did not learn that she was completely crippled. During the night he followed the French till in the general chase his ships lost all semblance of a line and the fleet had to reform at daylight of the 29th. The French had been reinforced in the night by the arrival of another ship of the line, which, however, had to be detached to convoy the *Révolutionnaire*. An attempt was made by Howe to attack and crush the French rear, passing on opposite tacks. The French met this manœuvre with counter-manœuvre and sustained no serious damage, in part because of the misconduct of the ship *Cæsar*, which led the British line, and was slow in closing. The morning passed in desultory,

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resultless firing, and seeing that in this way there was no prospect of obtaining a victory, Howe ordered his fleet about 1 p.m. to pass through the French line and get to windward. The *Cæsar* was again slow in obeying, and made no attempt to break the French line; the other ships in the British van, with one exception, the *Queen*, failed even to close with the enemy; and the *Queen*, after closing, found that there was no chance of breaking through—so well did the French support each other, and such injury did their fire inflict upon her.

It was left to Howe himself, in his flagship the *Queen Charlotte*, to set the example, and show his followers the way through. Coming tenth in the British line, he forced his ship through the French line, near the rear, but he was followed by only two British ships. His manœuvre, however, seriously threatened the ships in the French rear, and compelled the French van to return to its support. The movement of the van rescued the threatened ships, but not before they had received serious injury; and a second time the fleets drew apart for the night, without any decisive success having been obtained by either. On this day, however, Howe had shown judgment and firmness; his failure was due to the disobedience of his van ships. In the British fleet the *Queen* was much damaged; the French had to send the *Indomptable* back to Brest under the escort of another ship of the line; a third ship of the line could not go about, and parted company with the fleet; a fourth was dismasted and had to be taken in tow. Thus the French fleet had been reduced during the 28–29th from 27 vessels of the line to 21 efficients, while the British force had only fallen from 26 to 25, though of these 25 many had suffered considerable damage. Not only this, but Howe had worked to windward of the French, and now, if he chose, could force a decisive battle upon them. If he had had with him the six ships, detached under Montagu, he should have been able to strike a deadly blow and to annihilate the French. As it was, on the 30th four ships of the line joined the French and brought their efficient strength up to 25, while Howe's detachment was still absent. Thus he was once more on a footing of equality with his foe.

All the 30th and morning of the 31st the weather was foggy; and, owing to difficulties in the transmission of signals, neither fleet could fight. The fog lifted on the 31st, and the British closed once more on their antagonists, but could not reach a position near enough for battle until the evening; and Howe, not caring to take the risks of a night action, and knowing that many of his captains lacked experience, drew off a little. During the night the French, whose ships sailed better than the British, also drew away, but not enough to enable them to avoid an encounter. On June 1 each side formed in line, the British in line-abreast, the French in line-ahead, and Howe signalled the order to his ships to pass through the enemy's line, raking the vessels in it as they passed. He intended his whole force to strike the French line

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simultaneously; and, to achieve this, his advance upon the French was slow. His object in breaking their line and getting to leeward of them was to prevent the escape of their disabled ships and to use his lower-deck guns with more effect. Once more the conduct of the *Caesar* attracted unfavourable attention; at the left extremity of the British line, a place of honour, she showed no eagerness to close with the enemy, and opened fire at an excessive distance, throwing her shots away.

Slightly in advance of the fleet the *Queen Charlotte* with Howe's flag reached the French line about 9.30 a.m., but at a point three ships away from Villaret-Joyeuse's flagship, which Howe desired as a matter of etiquette to engage. He stood along the French line, till he found his quarry; then he forced his way through the line, brushing the French flagship's stern, while one by one the British guns were fired into her hull, with terrible effect. The *Jacobin*, close to Villaret-Joyeuse, failed to give the French admiral any support and weakly retired. The conflict was now general along the line, and the movements of the two combatants were wreathed in smoke. There was no effort on the part of the British to concentrate upon a portion of the French fleet and destroy it; on the contrary, his ships were ordered by Howe each to pick out an antagonist. The battle resolved itself into a number of ship combats, with little unity of design or direction. One of the fiercest of these combats was that between the French *Vengeur du Peuple* and the British *Brunswick*, which grappled each other and fought broadside to broadside. In this encounter the British had the upper hand, owing mainly to the fact that they were equipped with flexible rammers for their lower deck guns. When the ships were touching, the French found it impossible to load their lower deck guns with the ordinary ramrod. After three hours' fighting the two separated, leaving the *Brunswick* disabled and the *Vengeur* desperately injured. The *Vengeur* was assailed by another British ship, and all her masts were shot away; towards the evening it was evident that she was sinking, and she made signals of distress. Some four hundred of her men were rescued by the British; the others sank with the ship; and it appears to be the truth that those who perished perished with the cry "*Vive la République*," though they did not, as has been pretended, refuse to surrender.

Many of the French ships retired from the line early in the action and failed to support their admiral; many others were dismasted and dropped behind the main body of the two fleets in action, both drifting before the wind. Seeing that his fleet was scattered, Villaret took his ship out of the battle to leeward and signalled to the rest of his force to collect round him. This carried him away from his injured ships and left the British fleet between him and them; but the British, now that they had gained a great advantage, failed to make the fullest use of it, and only won a success which Nelson, not without reason, qualified with the stinging phrase "a Lord Howe victory." Of the 12 French

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vessels which had suffered seriously and lost more than one mast, five eventually escaped. The *Vengeur* was sunk; six others were captured. Howe felt fears for his fleet, as the French still showed fight and turned fiercely upon the *Queen*, which in a damaged state had dropped away from the other British ships. She was only extricated from Villaret's attack by the approach of the main body of the British fleet. Howe was moreover an old man, and was physically exhausted by the strain of many days of chasing and battle. The *Culloden* and *Thunderer*, while pressing after two disabled French vessels to secure them, were recalled by signal, and the rest of the French fleet was permitted to escape. The British loss in this series of battles was 290 killed and 858 wounded severely; while the French are estimated to have lost 5000 men in killed, wounded, and drowned, though in this figure the losses in the captured ships are included. In weight of metal the French were superior, in numbers equal.

The enemy on the afternoon of June 1 were in a position of decided inferiority; of the 18 ships which remained with Villaret, four were unmanageable and only nine in good fighting order; while the British had at least 15 efficient ships without counting their prizes. A resolute pursuit would then and there have ended the days of Villaret's squadron. But as it was, Howe bore away for a dockyard, and Villaret did the same. On his way back to port the French admiral was sighted off Brest by the squadron under Montagu, which Howe had detached before the battle, and which had subsequently been reinforced to a total of nine sail of the line. Instead of keeping at a moderate distance and harassing Villaret, which with his uninjured ships would not have been impracticable, Montagu retired to England. On June 12, two days after Montagu had withdrawn, the French convoy, which had been the immediate cause of the battle, entered Brest. Thus the British had failed completely in attaining their strategical object, and had only very imperfectly attained their tactical object — the defeat and destruction of Villaret's force. On the whole the French had no reason to be greatly dissatisfied with this campaign. Their fleet, notwithstanding the disorganisation caused by the Revolution, had confronted the force of Howe without suffering complete disaster, and had secured the safe arrival of the great convoy in France.

In the autumn of 1794 Howe put to sea with his fleet, after a mutiny in the *Culloden* had been suppressed and punished with severity, to escort various important convoys clear of the Bay of Biscay. He looked into Brest; but no fighting resulted. In November the French Admiral Nielly sailed from Brest with the object of intercepting a British convoy homeward bound, but did not succeed in doing this, though he fell in with the British 74-gun ship *Alexander*, and captured her. In December Villaret-Joyeuse received orders to put out and escort southwards a division of six ships which was destined for the Mediterranean, and the

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arrival of which at Toulon some weeks later caused Hood so much uneasiness. Though the British in no way interfered with Villaret, the French ships suffered seriously from the bad weather, defective material, and the inexperience of the crews. The *Républicain* was lost while getting out of Brest; three vessels sank at sea owing to the damage done to their spars, rigging, and hulls in the battle of June 1; a fourth ran ashore to escape the same fate; two others were compelled to make for the nearest harbour to obtain supplies; and the six ships destined for the Mediterranean, which were the only units in the squadron properly provisioned, had to tranship to Villaret's vessels so large a quantity of their stores that they were unable to undertake the voyage to Toulon and were compelled to return with Villaret to Brest. Seventy merchantmen were captured from the British; but this was the only result achieved by risking the fleet. The squadron for the Mediterranean filled up with stores and succeeded in getting away from Brest on February 22, 1795; eight days earlier Howe had put to sea with a large fleet, but he made no attempt to blockade the French closely, and speedily returned to Spithead, leaving his enemy free to go whither they listed. The bitterness of the French towards the British was indicated by a decree passed in December, 1794, by the Convention, which ordered that no British or Hanoverian prisoners were to be taken. In practice, however, this order was uniformly disregarded by the French navy, as steps were taken on the part of the British to meet it with reprisals.

For some months after its disastrous cruise Villaret's fleet remained in Brest in a battered condition without sufficient men to take the ships to sea. In May, 1795, however, it was once more in a condition to undertake operations; and a small squadron under Rear-Admiral Vence was sent into the Bay of Biscay to escort northwards a French convoy. Vence and his convoy were encountered on June 8, off Cape Penmarck, by Vice-Admiral Cornwallis with five British ships of the line and three small craft. Cornwallis' mission was to keep a watch upon Brest; he captured several of the convoy and drove Vence under shelter of the batteries of Belleisle. Hearing of this Villaret put to sea from Brest with nine sail of the line and a number of smaller ships, and attempted to cut off Cornwallis. On June 16 he sighted the British detachment and at once gave chase to it. The admirable nerve and seamanship of Cornwallis brought off the British force intact. The French showed timidity in attacking, notwithstanding their great advantage in numbers. Cornwallis was thanked, not undeservedly, by both Houses of Parliament for his conduct on this occasion.

Villaret was returning to Brest from his unsuccessful chase, when on June 22 he was sighted by the main British fleet under Admiral Lord Bridport, who had temporarily replaced Howe and was covering the disembarkation of a French royalist expedition at Quiberon. The French fleet was twelve sail of the line strong, the British main fleet

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fourteen strong, while three more ships were detached under Commodore Sir John Borlase Warren to cover the landing at Quiberon. Villaret, in the face of such odds, with ships under his orders which paid no attention to his signals, could do nothing but retreat; in the chase that followed his less efficient ships fell to the rear; on June 23 the *Alexander* was recaptured by the British off Île de Groix; the French *Formidable* was set on fire and compelled to strike; and the *Tigre* was also taken. In the opinion of good French officers the whole of the French fleet might have been captured, if Bridport had displayed energy and determination; but he was content with his three trophies and allowed Villaret to retreat to Lorient. There the French remained till the winter, when they returned in twos and threes to Brest. As the coast was now clear, de Puisaye with 2500 *émigrés* landed at Quiberon on June 27, and captured Fort Penthièvre, but his victory was short-lived, since on July 20 the fort was recaptured, and all who could not escape by sea were massacred. During this campaign the British seized the small islands of Houat, Hoedic, and Yeu, off the French coast, but failed in attempts to secure Belleisle and Noirmoutier. Yeu was only held for a few months. Bridport remained at sea until the autumn, and then returned to winter in port, according to the practice of the navy in the earlier years of the war. Discouraged by these events, the French government determined to abandon the policy of risking fleet action for the command of the sea, and decided to use small squadrons for the attack upon British commerce.

In 1796 the French, now assured of the assistance of Spain and Holland and freed from all uneasiness as to the Vendée, prepared to attempt an invasion of British territory; though in view of the fact that the British had everywhere asserted their naval superiority and had even succeeded in seizing and holding the islets of St Marcouf, within sight of the Norman coast, the chances of carrying out such a project were but small. So far back as September, 1793, instructions had been given by the Committee of Public Safety to prepare at Brest for the disembarkation of a force of 100,000 men on the British coast; but owing to the weakness of the French navy this order had remained a dead letter. In 1796, however, General Hoche took up the project of invasion, and pressed it under two distinct forms. The first was to land a small force of guerillas, recruited from criminals and bad characters, who would simply effect a diversion; the second was an expedition in force, which the Directory decided should be directed against Ireland, then on the eve of rebellion.

An elaborate and complicated project was drawn up in June, 1796, by the Directory, which provided for the following expeditions: (1) against India, where a small force was to be landed to aid Tippoo Sahib; (2) against Ireland, where the fleet destined for India was to disembark 5000 men in Connaught; (3) another expedition with 6000

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men was to follow to the same quarter from Brest; (4) from Holland a third expedition, 5000 men strong, was to be directed on Connaught; (5) guerilla detachments were to be landed in Wales and Cornwall, as diversions. But the French navy was not given clearly to understand that these expeditions against British territory were of great importance; on the contrary it was allowed to suppose that the expedition to India was the primary interest, so that preparations were made for this and not for the Irish enterprises. Hence arose conflicts between Hoche and the French Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse. In the autumn of 1796 Hoche made a journey to Basel, where he met the Irish insurrectionary leaders, Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Arthur O'Connor, and on his return from this interview his plans were modified. There was to be but one expedition to Ireland, accompanied by a guerilla diversion on the English coast. The force employed was to be 20,000 strong, and instructions were issued in October to Villaret, giving the French navy orders to make ready for the expedition to Ireland; but at the same time the naval authorities were informed that the project against India had not been abandoned.

Up to this point the navy at Brest had been preparing for a distant expedition, and now great changes had to be made in the fittings of the ships, so as to permit of the conveyance of a large body of men for a short distance. Hence there were fresh delays and more quarrels between Hoche and Villaret, who might justly have complained of the want of concentration of purpose on the part of his superiors at Paris. Hoche was at length directed to choose another admiral as commander of his naval force; and he selected Rear-Admiral Morard de Galles, who was experienced, but old, short-sighted, and lacking in decision. The state of the fleet was deplorable. Of 16 ships of the line nominally ready at Brest, on November 19, few were prepared to set sail; and no instructions had been given to the captains. Everything was in "utter disorder," according to Hoche's own words. 13,897 men were, however, embarked; and, after waiting until Admiral Richery, who had just returned to Brest with a small squadron from a campaign in Newfoundland waters, was ready for sea, the flotilla set sail on December 16, numbering 17 battleships, 13 frigates, and 15 other vessels. The main British fleet was at that moment wintering at Spithead, under the command of Lord Bridport; a detached squadron under Admiral Colpoys, 13 sail strong, was cruising to the west of Brest; while closer in to the French port was a detachment of five frigates and light craft under Captain Sir Edward Pellew. On December 15 Pellew sent off a ship to tell Colpoys that the French were coming out; on December 16 another vessel followed on the same mission; on December 17 a third was despatched to England. But at the critical moment when the news reached England, Bridport, through the negligence of the Admiralty, was left without instructions, which delayed his sailing for some days.

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Thus the strategic policy of keeping the British fleet in harbour during the winter instead of blockading the French ports, combined with the slackness at headquarters, gave the French an opening of which, fortunately for the British, they were able to make but little use, owing to the bad discipline of their fleet and the irresolution of their commanders.

Morard de Galles' instructions were to avoid fighting, and pursue tactics of evasion. On leaving Brest he had ordered his fleet to make use of the Raz passage; but, as night fell and the wind blew strong, he changed his mind and pushed through the Iroise channel. Only a fraction of his fleet knew of this change of plan and followed him; the rest of the ships, paying no attention to his signals, and confused by deceptive signals which Pellew made, with the express purpose of misleading the French as he clung to their force within half-gunshot, entered the Raz passage, which is of extreme difficulty. From their want of training the French ships fell into complete disorder. One vessel of the line struck a rock and was lost; and though the others safely made the passage of the Raz, when they reached open water they found that the flagship with Morard de Galles was not in sight. The instructions in case of separation were to make Mizen Head on the Irish coast and there cruise for five days. When Mizen Head was reached the greater part of the expedition was found there, but Morard de Galles and Hoche were missing. They had embarked in a frigate, and, being chased by a British vessel, had been driven far to the west. Rear-Admiral Bouvet, the senior French naval officer, gave orders to enter Bantry Bay, but was only obeyed by a part of the force, either because of bad seamanship or deliberate disobedience. On December 22, 16 vessels entered Bere Haven; 19 remained outside the harbour, and on December 23 had disappeared, scattered by storms.

The ships which entered the harbour carried only some fragments of the expeditionary force; Hoche and Morard, who had the plans and the money, were still missing; and Grouchy, the senior military officer, could dispose of but 6382 men with 8 unhorsed guns. Nevertheless he ordered a disembarkation on December 24, when the weather, which had been unfavourable throughout, became so stormy that to effect a landing was out of the question. On December 25 several of the vessels in the bay either drove from their anchors or had to weigh and put to sea, among them Bouvet's flagship. Those left in the bay followed their example after a short delay. Bouvet hovered off the coast for a few days and then on December 29 steered for Brest, short of provisions. Meantime other detachments of the expedition entered Bantry Bay and there remained, waiting in vain, till January 6; when, as Hoche did not appear and nothing more was seen of the main body of the expedition, they withdrew, and returned to Brest. As for Hoche and Morard de Galles, they were unable to approach the Irish coast, owing to easterly

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winds, until December 29, when off Bantry Bay they fell in with two French ships, one in a sinking condition and the other engaged in removing the crew and troops from her. From them the commanders learnt of the retreat of Bouvet from Bantry Bay; and, encumbered with men and short of stores, they determined forthwith to return to Brest. They anchored off the Île d'Aix after being chased by the British and narrowly escaping capture, on January 13. Thus was England delivered from what Wolfe Tone declared with but little exaggeration to have been her greatest peril since the Armada.

On learning that the French expedition was at sea, Bridport's sailing was delayed, as has been seen, till January 3, 1797, when he steered for Brest but failed to intercept the French retreat. Colpoys, who should have prevented the escape of the French fleet from Brest, had moved too far from that port; and, when he did hear on December 19 that the enemy were at sea, he made no effort to find and attack them, perhaps in part because he had the misfortune to sight a French squadron on its way round from Toulon to Brest, and chased it. This drew him away from the Irish expedition. Finally he was caught in a gale and compelled to run to Spithead. But though the French thus evaded the main British forces, they suffered heavy losses from collisions with British single ships and frigate detachments; of the 45 vessels which set sail from Brest seven were taken, while no fewer then six were wrecked or foundered. Such a heavy loss from defective material or bad seamanship is the clearest evidence of the fact that the French navy was at this date unfit to undertake so serious an enterprise. A report, compiled from the statements of the captains, showed that the crews were badly clad and unable to face the cold, and that they behaved mutinously. Some ships were lost at sea because the men could not or would not shorten sail. As for the British fleet, while the individual ships were excellently handled, the strategy and generalship that permitted French vessels to lie in or off Bantry Bay continuously from December 20 to January 6 without molestation have excited well-merited censure. Nor were adequate preparations made on land to concentrate a strong force against the French.

The diversion which the French authorities had planned was even less successful than Hoche's expedition. A force of convicts and deserters, 1500 strong, was placed under the orders of an American adventurer, Colonel Tate, and embarked at Brest, with orders to destroy Bristol or Liverpool. A landing was to be effected in Cardigan Bay. On February 22, 1797, the force disembarked from four ships on the Pembroke coast, but there it was at once surrounded by British yeomanry and militia under Lord Cawdor. The ships withdrew and it could not re-embark. Without any fighting it surrendered.

Two other French expeditions to Ireland, in which the French navy co-operated, may be mentioned here, though both took place in 1798.

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The first was the despatch under General Humbert in August, 1798, of 1099 men embarked in three frigates. The object was to assist the insurgents in Ireland by giving them the support of a nucleus of trained soldiers with a large supply of ammunition and arms. The expedition sailed from Rochefort on August 6, and standing far out into the Atlantic, reached Ireland unobserved, disembarked the troops on the 22nd, and returned without misadventure to France. Humbert's force was too weak to effect anything serious and was landed in a remote corner of Mayo, where the French found no adherents; yet it marched far into Ireland before it was met by superior forces and compelled to surrender, on September 8, at Ballinamuck. The second expedition had been originally intended to sail from Brest simultaneously with General Humbert's force, but was delayed, as the government could not provide a month's advance pay for the troops, who were in a pitiable state. When the money was found, the British fleet closed in on the port; and an attempt to put to sea on August 20 had to be abandoned. On September 16, however, the British were out of sight, as their main fleet had retired to Torbay; and on that day 10 ships, eight of which were of the frigate class, under Commodore Bompard, with 2884 troops under General Hardy, and a large supply of stores and ammunition for the Irish insurgents, put to sea from Brest. On the 17th Bompard was seen and chased by cruisers detached from Bridport's fleet, and Bridport was informed that the enemy were at sea. The French were followed and watched by three British frigates until October 4; and during this long chase news was sent by the British senior captain to Ireland that the Irish coast was the destination of the expedition. Bridport, as soon as he learnt of the French movement, despatched three ships of the line and five frigates under Commodore Sir John Borlase Warren to intercept them. On October 11 this squadron sighted Bompard to the west of Tory Island, and, after a long pursuit, attacked him on the 12th, capturing four of his ships. Three more were taken in the next few days, and the three which were left could effect nothing and returned to France. Bompard, and the Irish leader, Wolfe Tone, were among the prisoners taken by the British in the captured ships. A third small expedition, despatched from France in October under Commodore Savary, reached Sligo Bay, but there learning of the failure of the other expeditions hurriedly returned to France, and regained Rochefort in safety.

During the early months of 1797 the British fleets in home waters were completely disorganised by mutinies at Spithead and the Nore. In February petitions were sent by four ships in the Channel fleet to Lord Howe, who had just relinquished the command of that fleet and possessed great influence among the men. No attention was given to them, as Bridport reported that there was no serious feeling of discontent; but in

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April, when the Channel fleet returned to port, fresh petitions were received by Howe, complaining that, while provisions had increased in price by 30 per cent., the pay of the seaman remained at its old figure. It was pointed out that the seamen had been overlooked when the pay of the land forces and militia was augmented. The men protested that their requests for better pay were not prompted by any spirit of disaffection or sedition; "on the contrary, it is indigence and extreme penury alone that is the cause of our complaint." On April 12 the Admiralty received news from Admiral Parker, commanding at Portsmouth, that a concerted scheme existed for the seizure of the Channel fleet on April 16. In a despatch to the Admiralty on April 15 Bridport expressed the hope that the fleet would not be ordered to sea till some answer had been given to the men's request. When on that day the fleet received orders from London by semaphore to get under way, the crews mutinied, ran up the rigging and cheered, and elected a parliament of delegates from each ship. Vice-Admiral Sir Alan Gardner picked out the best men and argued with them, but without effect; and the admirals reported that it was impossible to think of vigorous measures against the seamen. On the 16th the mutineers informed their officers that they would wait two days for a reply from the Admiralty, and, if none arrived, would put their officers ashore. A document detailing the men's grievances was drawn up by the delegates of the fleet; it showed the need of increased pay, asked for better quality and full weight in the provisions issued, required that the sick should be better cared for, that the wounded should be paid until they recovered or were discharged, and that leave to go on shore should be given when possible. There was nothing unreasonable in these requests; and in the position in which England then stood it was of the utmost importance that they should have been promptly granted, as day by day the mutiny spread and began to assume a more threatening aspect. It was clearly a concerted and organised movement, though the organisers are not known.

Four members of the Admiralty Board went down in great haste to Portsmouth, and on April 18 and 20 gave assurances to the mutineers that their grievances in the matter of pay should be remedied. The men, however, required the King and Parliament to sanction the proposals made by the Admiralty and to grant a general pardon. On this Admiral Gardner declared with impolitic violence that every fifth seaman in the fleet should be hanged — thus proving that the men had not without good reason required an act of oblivion. A scuffle resulted, but no harm befell anyone; indeed, throughout, in the words of an officer of the fleet, the "men conducted themselves with a degree of prudence and decency which I thought them incapable of." Further concessions were inevitable; and on April 23 Bridport was able to inform the men that the full redress of all grievances had been conceded, and that the King had granted his pardon to all concerned in the mutiny. Many

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unpopular officers had by this time been put ashore, especially those who had ill-treated the men. Among the men's complaints, as showing what occurred in some ships, was one to the effect that in the *Nymphe* three dozen lashes with the cat-of-nine-tails had been given for "silent contempt," which meant smiling after being flogged by the boatswain's mate, and that the lieutenants in the same ship regularly beat the men with the end of the fore-brace, a rope 4 in. round. In the *Marlborough* the crew asserted that two quartermasters were hung up to the rigging with their hammocks on their shoulders for an hour and a half in cold weather, and that a man had died from flogging and ill-treatment at the hand of Captain Nicholls — an officer whom the Admiralty ultimately removed.

On the 24th part of the fleet dropped down to St Helen's, the men expecting to receive the news that Parliament had voted the grant necessary for the increase in pay. But no such news arrived. The Admiralty preserved an attitude of secretiveness; in the House of Lords all mention of the mutiny was deprecated, while in the House of Commons there was delay in voting the supplies. Indiscreet speeches were made in Parliament; and on May 1 the Admiralty issued an order directing officers to use the most vigorous means to insure proper discipline and subordination. There was a minatory ring in this order which alarmed the men and led them to think that faith was going to be broken by the Admiralty. On May 7 the mutiny broke out afresh, as the fleet refused to obey Bridport's order to put to sea. Most of the ships were seized without much resistance from the officers; but, on the delegates of the fleet proceeding to the *London*, which carried the flag of Vice-Admiral Colpoys, a conflict ensued, an officer was wounded, and the marines fired upon the men, with the result that there was loss of life, five of the men being killed or mortally wounded. Lieutenant Bover, who gave the order to fire, was seized; but even in the heat of the conflict the men granted him a hearing, and though a rope was placed round his neck they did him no harm, when Colpoys came forward and declared that he had only obeyed orders. Colpoys himself was threatened with death, and was confined on board, but in the end was allowed to go. On May 9 copies of the vote of Parliament granting the increase in supplies were received, but did not allay the ill-feeling. The extraordinary step was therefore taken by the government of sending down Howe, with full power to redress all grievances. He arrived at Portsmouth on May 11 — none too soon, for there was talk in one of the ships of sailing into Brest. On the 13th he induced the crews to express contrition for their conduct, in return for which he removed the unpopular officers, of whom 34 were of and above lieutenant's rank, announced the King's pardon, and persuaded the men to put to sea. Fifty boats manned with seamen escorted him back to shore, and delayed the sailing of the fleet. Bridport complained that there was "no end to his difficulties" as the result of the shock that discipline had received.

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The Spithead mutiny ended on May 17 with the sailing of the fleet. There was a similar outbreak, similarly met, in a detached squadron of the Channel fleet under Admiral Curtis, which was lying in Torbay and which came round to Spithead in defiance of all orders, remaining at Portsmouth after Bridport had sailed. There was also sporadic trouble in the fleet throughout the summer and autumn, and there are obscure traces of a political conspiracy to compel the government to make peace. Yet throughout the mutinies the men protested their readiness to fight, if the French put to sea, and made no attempt to keep in port the frigates charged with the protection of British commerce. Admiral Patton appears on the whole to have been right in declaring that the mutiny was caused by the men's hardships and not by "revolutionary principles."

At the Nore and in the North Sea fleet, which was then under Admiral Duncan, watching the Dutch fleet, a yet more serious outbreak occurred. On May 2 four of the North Sea ships hoisted the red flag while lying at the Nore, sent their officers ashore, and anchored across the Thames, beginning a semi-blockade of the port of London. The trouble appeared at Yarmouth and infected the rest of Duncan's fleet. The mutinous ships at the Nore were day by day reinforced; they elected committees and delegates, and on May 14 chose as their leader Richard Parker, who had formerly served as midshipman, had been degraded by court martial for insubordination and discharged as unfit for service in 1794, and had just rejoined the navy as a "quota" man. They put forward demands far in advance of those of the crews of the Channel fleet, requiring that leave should be given to the men in port as matter of right, that prize money should be more evenly divided, and that the articles of war should be recast and their penalties mitigated. At the same time they insisted that the Admiralty Board should come to Sheerness and treat with them. The Channel fleet having returned to obedience, the Admiralty refused to grant these demands, but offered a pardon to the crews if they were withdrawn. The seamen, however, declined to submit, fired on the fort at Sheerness, moored their ships, which in early June had risen to 26 in number, across the river, enforced a strict blockade, stopped 150 colliers and helped themselves from these vessels when all supplies were cut off. The Admiralty Board went down to Sheerness, but, finding the mutineers quite impracticable, took strong measures. Parliament, on June 6, passed two Acts directed against the mutineers, one of which forbade all communication with the fleet; 15,000 troops were collected on the coast; the fort at Tilbury fired on the seamen; the buoys and beacons at the mouth of the Thames were removed; the batteries on the river were directed to heat the furnaces and use hot shot if necessary. There were reports that the mutineers intended to carry the ships over to the French coast; but these do not seem to have had any real foundation, as the delegates bound themselves

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by oath to have no dealings with any "Jacobins," protested their loyalty, and on the King's birthday fired a royal salute. As the result of the government's vigorous measures the mutiny collapsed; and, not without some bloodshed, the vessels concerned in it submitted one by one. Parker was arrested on board the *Sandwich* on June 14, which was the last day of the mutiny. Twenty of the delegates escaped to France in small boats, but the rest were seized and brought to trial. Parker, with several others, was condemned to death and executed; many were flogged round the fleet; and 180 were detained in prison till the victory of Camperdown, when they were pardoned by the King. At his execution Parker protested against the ill-treatment to which the seamen were too often subjected by their officers. It was held by some naval officers that this particular mutiny was due to political intrigues and the incitement of an extreme section of the Opposition; but of this no definite proof has as yet been discovered.

Other minor mutinies occurred in 1797 in the Mediterranean fleet and in the squadron on the Cape station, but were suppressed without much trouble. In the West Indies, however, there was a horrible outbreak on board the frigate *Hermione*, whose crew, on the night of September 22, rose, killed in cold blood ten of the officers, and carried the ship into the Spanish port of La Guayra, where they delivered her into the hands of the enemy. In one or two other ships on foreign stations there were similar plots, which did not, however, succeed. The feeling of discontent and disaffection lingered on in the navy for many years, and caused some uneasiness on the eve of Trafalgar.

It has always been a source of surprise that the French government made no use of these mutinies to strike at Ireland or England, since after the return of the French ships from the unhappy expedition to Bantry Bay in 1797 there were 30 ships of the line and 14 frigates at Brest under Admiral Villeneuve. These ships, however, were short of men, having only 15,616 officers and men on board, whereas their full complement should have been 23,928. The state of discipline was bad; and there was a general want of stores and equipment. Nothing whatever was attempted before the end of June; and the opportunity was allowed to pass, never to recur. An explanation of this inactivity may perhaps be found in a letter of the French Minister of the Navy to Hoche in June, 1797, wherein he states that in the existing condition of fermentation in England it would be unwise to attempt an invasion, as this would unite the nation in resistance to the invaders. England was to be left to work her own ruin. But, as the same letter adds that the argument does not apply to Ireland, the French inaction is not entirely explained.

The mutiny in the North Sea fleet might well have led to disaster had the Dutch been able to put to sea during its continuance. In 1795

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the Batavian Republic joined the enemies of England, and concluded a treaty with France, which contained the stipulation that Holland should place 12 ships of the line and 18 frigates at the disposal of France. The Dutch fleet, though ill-equipped and not too well affected to the French, had thenceforth to be closely watched; and this duty was undertaken by Admiral Duncan with the North Sea fleet, assisted by a Russian squadron under Admiral Hanikoff. The work was performed with complete success all through 1795 and 1796; in the autumn of 1796 plans were made by the British for an attack on Texel Island, but owing to bad weather it was impossible to execute them. The danger from this quarter grew greater, when a large force of men was collected on the Dutch coast and a beginning was made at Dunkirk with the construction of a flotilla of small craft by a Flemish officer in the French service, Captain Muskeyn. In May, 1797, at the date of the Nore mutiny, the Dutch fleet was reported to the British government to be preparing for sea, with 42 large transports. The secret information added that there was little doubt that an invasion was contemplated. Orders were at once issued to Duncan, then lying at Yarmouth, his base, to blockade the Dutch or bring them to action. The Russian fleet was under orders to return to Russia and could not be employed. Duncan, owing to the mutiny, could only induce 12 of his ships to put to sea, and being detained by calms off Yarmouth was deserted by all of these except two, the *Adamant* and his flagship, the *Venerable*. By his tact and decision he kept the crews of these ships loyal at a most critical moment, though he had great trouble with a mutinous section among the men. With the two ships he boldly undertook the blockade of the Texel, in which were lying 14 Dutch sail of the line.

The Dutch do not appear to have been aware of his weakness, as it was the British custom when blockading only to keep one or two ships close up to the hostile port, and the others within signalling distance, but out of sight of land. They were, too, troubled with disaffection among their officers and seamen, while the French authorities did not bring pressure to bear to secure the sailing of the fleet until June 21. On that date the Directorate urged that the ships at the Texel should put to sea as speedily as possible for Ireland with 20,000 men. At the same time 6000 men were to sail from Brest in 12 ships of the line. After five days of great anxiety, from June 5 to 10, in which Duncan asserted his determination, if attacked, to sink with his two ships in the fairway, the peril passed and he was reinforced. All through the summer the blockade was effectively maintained until September, when, hearing that the Dutch ships had disembarked their troops, he returned to Yarmouth, leaving only a small squadron to observe their movements.

He was at Yarmouth when on October 9 a cruiser brought him the news that the enemy under Admiral de Winter had put to sea. They had sailed with the intention of disembarking a force on the Clyde, and so

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compelling the British government to recall its troops from Ireland. On the eve of their departure Hoche, the life and soul of these enterprises against Ireland, had died of tuberculosis. The fleet was sent out to oblige the French government, notwithstanding the protests of de Winter, who had repeatedly insisted on the utter futility of an isolated encounter with the British for an object which he considered chimerical. On October 11 the Dutch, 16 ships of the line strong, were sighted off Camperdown by Admiral Duncan, who also had 16 ships. A strong wind was blowing from north to north-west; Duncan was moving south-west, while the Dutch were standing north-eastwards towards the Texel, so as to bring a friendly port under their lee. In a straggling line they confronted the British fleet, which after giving chase and closing with them, formed in a slanting line abreast, parallel to the Dutch fleet, so as to strike simultaneously all along the Dutch line. At 11.25 a.m. Duncan signalled to his ships each to select and engage an antagonist. He made no attempt to concentrate superior numbers upon a detail of the enemy; and in this his tactics represent the common procedure of the British navy before Nelson showed the better method. But at 11.53 he issued another order which stamps him as a capable and daring leader; his ships were to break through the Dutch line and engage to leeward. The movement would place the British fleet in the line of the Dutch retreat and render a decisive battle certain; it also gave some tactical advantage, since in stormy weather the ships in the windward line would experience difficulty in opening their lower deck ports, and would find that the guns ran out by gravity, after the recoil, before they could be secured and loaded. On the other hand, with the strong wind that was blowing, Duncan risked losing disabled ships on the dangerous coast, not far distant.

The battle of Camperdown, or Kamperduin, was not, as had been planned, a mere ship-to-ship encounter. Whether by mistake, as the result of the hoisting of an incorrect signal in the flagship, or by instinct, the British, when they struck the Dutch line, effected a concentration upon the rear, with the result that the enemy's resistance in that direction terminated after an hour of fierce fighting, in which the loss on either side was very heavy. Some of the Dutch ships struck, others fled from the line. The British ships disengaged by this success moved up towards the centre, where Duncan was bearing the brunt of the battle with a small group of ships, and was as yet making small headway. The British *Venerable* and *Ardent* were in great peril; the *Ardent* lost one-third of her crew, and the *Venerable* had so many hits betwixt wind and water that the pumps could scarcely keep the water under; when a fire broke out in the Dutch *Hercules*, it was at first supposed in the British fleet that the *Venerable* was burning. But with the arrival of the victorious British ships from the Dutch rear the pressure on Duncan was removed and the battle in the centre inclined decisively against the Dutch. Soon after 3 p.m. the firing died away along the Dutch line,

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and the Dutch flagship *Vrijheid*, with Admiral de Winter on board, lowered her colours.

Of the 16 Dutch ships nine were taken by Duncan, while two Dutch frigates were also secured by him. Seven ships of the line escaped, one or two bolting ignominiously from the conflict, but in a very damaged condition. The British fleet was considerably superior in weight of metal, with a broadside of 11,501 lbs. to the Dutch 9857. The losses as returned were in the British fleet 203 killed and 622 wounded, and in the Dutch fleet 1160 killed and wounded.

The Dutch losses, however, were never accurately known, and the figure given includes slightly wounded who were not counted in the British returns; the casualties were therefore probably about equal on either side. The Dutch prizes captured were in a shattered condition, while the victors also sustained great damage. The victory destroyed the fighting power of the Dutch navy and dispelled all fear of an invasion from Holland. In August, 1799, the work achieved at Camperdown was completed by the despatch of a combined expedition to Holland, which captured the Texel and twelve remaining ships of the Dutch fleet without bloodshed.

Soon after the defeat of the Dutch at Camperdown the French government once more turned its attention to the invasion of England, and in October, 1797, appointed Bonaparte, then fresh from his Italian victories, to command the French expeditionary force. Early in February, 1798, Bonaparte visited the French coast near Calais, despatching other of his most trusted officers to examine other points. As the result of his journey he matured the idea of employing a flotilla of small craft; but his final conclusions were that to effect a landing in England without being master of the sea would be the "most temerarious and difficult operation ever attempted," that the French fleet was then unequal to such an enterprise, and that the enterprise could only be accomplished by surprise. He pointed out that much time must elapse before the necessary preparations could be completed, suggested that the best method of procedure would be actually to renounce all idea of an expedition against England, while still appearing to prepare for it, and advocated, as a means of compelling the British to make peace, an expedition to the Levant, which would threaten British commerce. This report was drawn up on February 23, 1798, and was the precursor of the Egyptian expedition.

The British navy in this period was not less successful in its minor than in its major operations. Throughout the war isolated ship encounters occurred, in which almost without exception the British had the upper hand. Some of their victories were won with consummate ease, owing, no doubt, to the complete disorganisation of the French as the result of the Revolution. Thus in four single ship actions at the opening of the war the British took their opponents without themselves losing a life,

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and inflicted in these four instances casualties of 81, 51, 42, and 20. In some cases the small loss of the British was due to the French practice of firing to dismast, which brought defeat on the French in action after action. But the French shooting was always so bad that French captains were able to make little use of the superior construction and better lines of their ships. As for the Spaniards, they were worse seamen than the French, and their hearts do not appear to have been in the war with England, so that they proved feeble antagonists.

By interrupting communications between the various colonies of the nations at war with England and the mother-countries, the British navy facilitated the reduction of most of the foreign possessions of France and Holland. At the close of the eighteenth century great economic importance attached to the West Indies; and it was there that the most important conquests were made. When war broke out between France and England, the British were called in by the Royalists of San Domingo and occupied Jérémie, St Nicholas-Mole, and Léogane without resistance. The French island of Tobago was also captured by the British in 1793. In the following year a combined expedition under Vice-Admiral Sir John Jervis and General Sir Charles Grey attacked Martinique and mastered that island without any great difficulty, following up this success with the conquest of Santa Lucia and Guadeloupe. Guadeloupe, however, was retaken by the French, on the arrival of troops from France, as at this date the French coast was not closely blockaded and it was possible for considerable expeditions to cross the sea unobserved. Other successes were obtained by the British in San Domingo. But in 1795 the French in Guadeloupe, receiving further reinforcements, took the offensive, and succeeded in capturing Santa Lucia and stirring up troublesome insurrections in Dominica, St Vincent, and Grenada. In 1796 the British forces in the West Indies were strengthened and the tide turned; Santa Lucia was reconquered; St Vincent and Grenada were reduced to order. Possession was also taken of the Dutch colony of Demerara; while in 1797, when Spain joined in the war against England, Trinidad was wrested from her, and an unsuccessful attack was made upon Puerto Rico. In 1797 and 1798 the towns in San Domingo, of which the British had taken possession, were handed over to the negro general, Toussaint l'Ouverture. In 1799 the most important Dutch colony that remained in this part of the world, Surinam, was captured.

On the Newfoundland coast, possession was taken of the French islands of St Pierre-Miquelon on the outbreak of war. In the East Indies the French colonies were captured without difficulty in 1793; and in 1795 the Dutch colonies of Ceylon and Malacca and the scattered settlements on the Indian coast were overpowered by small conjoint expeditions. Amboyna and the Banda Islands were seized in 1796. The Dutch half-way house to India, Cape Town, was attacked in August, 1795, by a British expedition under Vice-Admiral Sir George Keith

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Elphinstone with a small body of troops; and, on the British receiving reinforcements from India, the Dutch capitulated in September. There was some insignificant fighting on the Sierra Leone coast and on the Madagascar coast between the British and the French.

A certain want of strategy and method is manifest in the British minor operations. No attempt was made to reduce the French colonies of Bourbon and the Isle of France on the flank of the route to India, whence the French were able to prey upon British East Indian commerce. In the West Indies the successes gained by England were of a precarious nature, owing to the manner in which French squadrons were permitted to cross the Atlantic and to throw in reinforcements. It was not until a rigorous blockade of the French coast was enforced by the British navy that the British conquests in this quarter were finally rendered secure. No attempt was made by the British to attack the important Spanish possession of Cuba, and Puerto Rico was not seriously threatened. The colonies of Spain on the American mainland were in the same way left untroubled, probably because the troops could not be spared to deal an effective blow against them.

A large number of British frigates and corvettes patrolled the Bay of Biscay, where the greatest danger to commerce from the enemy's cruisers and privateers was to be apprehended. A strong cruiser squadron under young and enterprising officers ranged from Cherbourg to Finisterre, and was supported by other divisions of two, three, or four cruisers, which were found more effective than single ships. Yet notwithstanding the fact that the number of British frigates and corvettes steadily rose, till in 1799 it reached 349, the enemy's depredations on British commerce were serious. In the years 1793–1800, 3466 British merchantmen were taken by the enemy, of which 700 were afterwards recaptured by the British cruisers. The heaviest loss was incurred in the year 1797. A list prepared by Norman, from what data it is impossible to ascertain, shows the following results, year by year, for British merchantmen taken by the French, and French privateers captured by the British, and affords some test of the intensity at various times of the attacks on commerce:

	1793	1794	1795	1796	1797	1798	1799	1800
British Merchantmen taken by the French	352	644	640	489	949	688	730	666
French Privateers taken by the British	44	9	23	41	134	136	104	65

The figures in this list do not agree with those given above, which are based on Lloyd's List.

As the result of these losses the insurance rates on British shipping were raised by the underwriters, and there was a natural tendency for British merchants to give neutral bottoms the preference. But,

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fortunately for England, there were no neutral navies strong enough to afford adequate protection to neutral commerce; and the two great belligerents treated neutrals with such severity that the rates of insurance on neutral shipping rose in the years 1797–9 to a higher point than on British bottoms, and thus brought about a reaction. The following were the clearances during the years 1792–1800 from England outwards of vessels, British and foreign, engaged in the foreign trade (the figures give thousands of tons).

	1792	1793	1794	1795	1796	1797	1798	1799	1800
British	1561	1240	1382	1145	1254	1103	1319	1302	1445
Foreign	175	187	218	382	478	896	865	414	685

The heavy losses of British shipping in 1797 led to the enactment of the Convoy Act in 1798, forbidding vessels to sail without escort; and this produced a great diminution of captures by the French.

But if British shipping suffered, French shipping by 1799 had vanished from the sea. The French government in its exasperation aimed decree after decree at British trade without effect; but at the same time with singular shortsightedness it plundered and annoyed neutral shipping to such an extent that this shipping avoided the French ports, and French trade was left without outlets or inlets except towards the Continent. Thus, while grass grew in the streets of Havre, the British shipowner flourished, and British trade expanded under the aegis of the dominant navy. The expansion might have been even greater had the British strength been more intelligently used, for throughout this war there was no attempt at the Admiralty to work out a comprehensive plan for commerce protection. Yet the trade supplied the sinews of war, and produced that wealth which enabled the nation to hold its own, while France was progressively impoverished, and driven to a disastrous policy of plundering other nations, which meant perpetual war with her neighbours. French 5 per cents in 1797, the year of the mutinies in the British navy, were at 20; British 3 per cents at 49. Marseilles was a city of the dead; the streets of Bordeaux were no longer lighted at night; at Calais the arrival of a ship was so rare an occurrence that crowds poured out to witness it. While the declared value of British exports was £31,252,836 for the year ending January 5, 1799, French over-sea trade had practically disappeared, and was represented only by exports aggregating a few thousand pounds.

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CHAPTER XVI

THE DIRECTORY

THE history of the Directory covers a period of four years — November, 1795, to November, 1799. Apart from the rise of Napoleon and the national bankruptcy its main interest lies in the failure of the attempt to substitute a constitutional for a revolutionary government.

The Constitution of the Year III had great merits; it was based not on *à priori* doctrines or metaphysical theories, but on experience. The separation of the legislative and executive functions, the system of indirect and limited suffrage, the division of large towns into separate municipalities, were measures dictated to the framers of the Constitution by their personal knowledge of the events of the Revolution. The one defect justly attributed to it, the denial to the Directors of the power of dissolving or adjourning the Chambers, would not have been fatal had the Constitution fairly started on its career. But this was not the case; quite unconsciously its authors dealt it a fatal blow by the law passed a few days after its completion enacting the retention in the *Corps Législatif* of two-thirds of the Members of the Convention for the first and of one-third for the second year.

Unjust as this law may have been in theory, and impolitic as it proved to be in fact, it appealed with irresistible force to the instinct of self-preservation, the leading motive of the members of the Convention, as of all bodies of men. The one known sentiment of the electors throughout France was their desire to be rid of the Convention, while in the southern Departments a further desire was manifesting itself, a desire for personal vengeance. The life of a member of the ex-Terrorist party seeking re-election would not be worth an hour's purchase if he fell into the hands of one of the Companies of the Sun or of Jesus. Moreover, a large proportion of the members were poor men, who had years ago lost their former means of living and were now dependent on the Convention for their daily bread. A year or two of peaceful progress might materially modify their present position and give them a fairer chance of a hearing. Under the influence of these considerations, it is not wonderful that the Convention was for once agreed and that the decrees retaining the "two-thirds" passed with hardly a dissentient voice. Unhappily, even

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the Convention had not fully realised the hatred and horror which its rule had inspired. The Sections of Paris rose in insurrection; and this insurrection led to a series of events which wrecked the prospects of the new Constitution before it had come into working existence, and perpetuated many of the worst features of the Revolution for four years. First came the interference of the army in civil discord, secondly, the reconversion of the Thermidorian party into Jacobins and the fatal Law of October 25 (3 Brumaire), thirdly, the formation of the "Two-Thirds" into a party bitterly hostile to the new members, with a temporary majority large enough to enable them to secure five Directors chosen from their own party. Each of these successive steps led directly to the *coup d'état* of September, 1797, and to the destruction of the Republic.

Under the new Constitution the system of election was indirect. The electors, consisting of all citizens over 21 years, able to read and write, and following a trade or liable to taxation, met in Primary Assemblies in each Canton and elected the members of the "Electoral Colleges," who in their turn assembled in the chief town of the Department, and in ten days of uninterrupted sittings elected Deputies, Judges, and Administrative Officers. In future years (except during the year 1796, when no elections were to take place) the Electoral Colleges were ordered to assemble on April 10; but on this first occasion they met on October 20, to elect the Deputies to the *Corps Législatif*, 493 of whom (forming the two-thirds less those to be returned by the colonies) were to be members of the Convention. On October 29 their task was completed; but only 389 Members of the Convention had been returned, leaving 104 to be co-opted by the elected Conventionalists themselves. The failure to return the necessary number was due to the fact that the members of the Right of the Convention had been elected for many Departments and the members of the Left for few or none. Thus Boissy d'Anglas was returned for seventy-two constituencies, Lanjuinais for sixty-nine, Thibaudeau for fifty-two, Saladin for thirty-six.

The newly-elected "Third" were for the most part men of character and reputation; many of them had sat in the Constituent or Legislative Assemblies; others were lawyers of note, former magistrates, Intendants, or military officers, such as, to name a few only, Dupont of Nemours, Mathieu Dumas, Barbé-Marbois, Tronchet, de Sèze, Pastoret, and Dumolard, the last-named a man gifted with a fatal fluency which brought small advantage to his friends.

The result of the election would have been to give a majority in either Chamber to the Moderate or Constitutional party had it not been for the necessary co-optation of the hundred and four unelected members of the Convention. As all the members of the Right and Centre were already elected, it was possible only to co-opt the least obscure or least notorious Conventionalists, but these were sufficient to give the Conventional or Revolutionary party a majority, temporary and fluctuating,

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but sufficient to outvote the new "Third" and their allies, the members of the Right of the Convention.

Ineffectual in the Chambers, the elections were conclusive as to the state of public opinion throughout the country. The Revolution had undoubtedly benefited many classes, above all the farmers and peasants who formed the bulk of the electors. It had abolished the *taille* and the feudal dues, and had enabled the farmer to buy the land for which he craved, at an almost nominal price. As Thibaudeau said, the fall in the assignats, while it had ruined the large proprietors and *rentiers*, had made the fortunes of the farmers. On the other hand there remained bitter memories of the tyranny and exactions of the Representatives on Mission, of the howling Jacobin mobs, of the Revolutionary tribunals and commissions of the guillotine. These were attributed to the Convention and its Committees, while the solid gains were held to be due to the Revolution itself. Liberty, Equality, and the Rights of Man, were terms which had lost all charm; universal apathy, a hatred of politics, and a longing for peace, had, in the early days of the Directory, succeeded to the fever and enthusiasm of former years; all that the electors now desired was to close the Revolution and to secure their gains against the tyranny of the Convention, and against the return of the King, the nobles, and the clergy, lest these should question their right to the property purchased from the estates of the *émigrés*, the Church, and the national domain. Therefore they returned as their representatives men whom they could trust to give them a settled government under a Republican Constitution.

On October 26 the Convention dissolved itself. On the following day the new body proceeded to elect from among its own number the two hundred and fifty members of the Council of the "*Anciens*": this done, the Chambers separated, the *Anciens* taking possession of the Hall in the Tuileries, in which the Convention had sat, and the Five Hundred of the *Manège*, the meeting place of the Constituent Assembly. The election of the Directors occupied the next three days. A meeting of the leaders of the Conventional Party, held immediately before the election, had decided that the Directory should be formed of five Members of the Convention, all of whom had voted the death of Louis XVI. The decision was one of self-defence; in view of the general hatred of the Convention shown by the electors, they held it essential to their safety that the executive should consist of men threatened as they were and bound in defending themselves to shield their late colleagues also. A list was therefore drawn up, beginning with the names of the five candidates favoured by the Conventionalists, Larevellière-Lépeaux, Sieyès, Rewbell, Barras, and Letourneur, followed by the names of forty-four perfectly unknown persons and ending with that of Cambacérès. The election was a first trial of strength between the two parties; the members of the new "Third" voted for Cambacérès and Larevellière, but the

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conventional majority prevailed, and on November 1 the five Directors of its choice were elected by the *Anciens*. Sieyès declined to accept office on the ground that he was unfitted for the post and was unpopular with every party. The reason was partly true. Sieyès was unfitted to be one among five rulers; his method was to pronounce his decision epigrammatically; he never condescended to argue or to compromise; he had also a strong personal dislike to Rewbell; and he bore no good-will to the Constitution which had been preferred to a scheme of his own. Carnot, who had been designed for the Ministry of War, was elected in his place; and the Directory was complete.

On November 3 the Directors installed themselves in the Luxembourg Palace and proceeded to appoint their six Ministers, Merlin of Douai, Minister of Justice; Bénézech, of the Interior; Delacroix, of Foreign Affairs; Admiral Truguet, of the Navy; Aubert-Dubayet, of War; and Faipoult, of Finance: the last-named was removed three months later, and was replaced by Ramel de Nogaret. In the spring of 1796 a seventh Ministry, that of Police, was created, to which Merlin was appointed; on his return to the Ministry of Justice a few weeks later he was succeeded by Cochon de Lapparent.

Louis-Marie de Larevellière-Lépeaux, the first of the Directors to be elected, was an *avocat* by profession, and had sat both in the Constituent Assembly and in the Convention. He was slightly deformed in person, awkward, ill-tempered, inordinately vain, and a dreary, platitudinous speaker; he had been a member of the Girondist party and still held to their faith and to their prejudices. His prevailing passion was an intense hatred of Christianity and of the clergy; the sight of a priest, to use Barras' phrase, "convulsed him"; and this hatred was strengthened by his attachment to the sect of Theophilanthropists to be described hereafter. The efforts made by the Constitutionalists to obtain some sort of toleration for the clergy attached him, after a short wavering, to Rewbell and Barras; and thus was formed a permanent majority of the Directors opposed to the Constitutional party. There is so little to be said in Larevellière's behalf that it is fair to note his honesty in pecuniary matters and his considerable knowledge of botany.

Jean-François Rewbell, before the Revolution a successful Alsatian *avocat*, had sat in the Constituent Assembly and in the Convention. He had been accused, while on a mission at Mainz, of accepting bribes from the Prussians; and though he had defended himself with sufficient success to escape prosecution, he never freed himself from the suspicions of his colleagues. During his term of office he was constantly surrounded by speculators and army contractors, men, as Carnot said, "accused of every form of peculation and fraud," whom he protected and who formed his only intimate society. Whether he joined them in robbing the public purse or whether he successfully speculated with his own money it is impossible to say; he certainly retired from office with a considerable fortune.

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Rewbell's political opinions were entirely revolutionary. His ideal system of government was a despotism of the type of the Committee of Public Safety; he regarded personal liberty as an absurd chimera; and altogether disbelieved in the virtue or honesty of politicians. These and many like opinions he was in the habit of expressing with a frank brutality which, coupled with a rough manner, a harsh voice, and a preference for insulting his colleagues, made him the most detested public man in France. None the less was he possessed of high ability, of masterful will, and of great business capacity; he led his two colleagues, Barras and Larevellière, and for nearly four years he governed the Directory while the Directory governed France.

Unlike the other Directors, all of whom were of the middle class, Paul-François-Jean-Nicolas de Barras was the cadet of a noble Provençal family. He had served in the army and, when the Revolution broke out, was living the life of a *déclassé* gentleman in Paris. His history during the Convention, his connexion with the young officer Bonaparte, and his conduct on the great days of Thermidor and of Vendémiaire are well known; his election to the Directory was no doubt due to the reputation for courage and military skill which he acquired on these occasions. Barras was tall and handsome, with a soldier-like frankness of manner and a fine voice. Emerging from a period when coarseness and vulgarity were part of the necessary equipment of a patriot, he retained traces of the manners of the old *régime;* he alone among the Directors carried himself with dignity in the somewhat flamboyant costume which they were condemned to assume. He united in his own person the worst characteristics of a licentious and insolent noble of the time of Louis XV, and of a truculent patriot of the Terror. Absolutely shameless, without honour or patriotism, he was ready to sell himself to any party or any country able and willing to purchase his services; he can hardly be said to have followed any policy except that of amassing a fortune, in which he succeeded so well, that after spending vast sums in entertainments and debauchery he retired with a sufficient fortune to support him in luxurious ease for the remainder of his long life.

Of Letourneur there is little to be said. He had served as a captain of engineers before the Revolution, and as a member of the Committee of War of the Convention. During his sixteen months of office he consistently supported Carnot, and formed with him the minority of the Directors.

Lazare-Nicolas-Marguerite Carnot stands on a different plane from the other Directors. He is perhaps the only member of the Convention to whom the epithet great can be applied. There can be no doubt of his genius for military organisation, of his patriotism, or of his probity. But he was now in an impossible position; he was the only important member of the Committee of Public Safety who had not perished or gone into exile. Those who were now his colleagues, whether Girondists

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or Thermidorian Dantonists, shared in the common horror of the terrible Committee. Hardly a day passed on which one or other of them failed to recall to him the fact that his signature was at the bottom of a hundred documents dealing death and ruin all around with impartial iniquity.

On one occasion when Barras had attacked him with vehement coarseness, Carnot raised his hands; "I swear," he began, when Barras exclaimed, "Do not lift your hands, they will drip with blood," and Carnot sank back into silence. And it was not only his colleagues who reproached him; his own mind was darkened with remorse and bitter memories. Hatred of the Terror and dread of its return brought him into entire sympathy with the "new Third," and with Boissy d'Anglas, Lanjuinais, and the other members of the Convention, who had joined them in the endeavour to establish a Constitutional Republic. The accusation of royalism was brought against him as against them, but no accusation could have been more absolutely false. To de La Rue, one of his supposed fellow-conspirators, he said, "If I had the King's pardon in my pocket I would not trust to it. The day after his restoration he would be compelled to revoke it."

Such were the five men to whom the destiny of France was entrusted. Their powers were great, practically far greater than those of the legislature. They held the appointment of all military officers of rank, of the Ministers, the diplomatic agents, the chief officials of the Excise and Public Domain, and, until the end of the war, all colonial appointments. They were represented in each Department and in each municipality by a commissary, in whose presence and with whose consent only the departmental or communal authorities could debate or act. Another Commissary was attached to each tribunal, including the Court of Final Appeal. They were empowered to sign treaties and to propose to the *Corps Législatif* declarations of war. The chief limitation of their power was that they could neither enact nor repeal laws, though they could propose either, and make any suggestions to the Chambers by formal messages. Their Ministers were rather chief clerks than Ministers, as the word is now understood, since they could neither meet together in Council nor sit in either Chamber of the Legislature. Practically the Directors were their own Ministers, Carnot taking the direction of the war and of the Army, Rewbell of Justice, Finance, and Foreign Affairs, Larevellière of Education, Religion, and National Manufactures, and Barras of Police. Each Director presided for a term of three months, acting as chairman and as spokesman on public occasions. The Directory was renewable each year by the retirement of one of its members chosen by lot; the retiring member was ineligible for this office for five years; he was at once replaced by a fresh election made by the Council of *Anciens*, from a list drawn up by the Five Hundred. The emoluments of each Director consisted of a yearly stipend of about

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£5000, a suite of rooms at the Luxembourg, furniture, equipages, and costumes. A guard of 120 cavalry and the same number of infantry were under their orders. The total budget of the Directory, exclusive of the cost of the guard, averaged from £70,000 to £80,000 yearly.

In practical working the Directors made an evil use of their power. When they entered on office they found the Luxembourg swarming with clamorous office-seekers, ex-members of the Convention, Jacobins often of execrable reputation, dismissed officers, patriots imprisoned after the insurrections of April 1 and May 20, 1795, and amnestied in October of the same year. From these they selected judges, magistrates, commissaries, and even diplomatic agents. There is probably much truth in Larevellière's explanation that these "men of blood and plunder" were forced upon the Directory by the impossibility of finding persons of good standing who would consent to serve the government. However this may be, these Jacobin officials tyrannised and robbed wherever they went, raising a storm of detestation not against themselves alone but against the Directors also, who had let them loose upon the country. In dealing with the Legislature the Directors were not more fortunate; their official messages were couched in an insolent, menacing tone, which constantly increased the ill-feeling between the rival powers. "The Directory dreaded nothing so much as a reconciliation with the *Corps Législatif*; they laboured with incredible activity to augment the causes of discontent and alarm," writes Carnot, describing the state of affairs after the elections of 1797; and the same may be said of their conduct from the day of their taking office. They quarrelled with one another, they quarrelled with the legislature, with the tribunals, with their own servants. The spirit of Rewbell — angry, despotic, overbearing — rings through all their official documents and their public utterances.

But the worst feature of the Directory was its corruption. It is not possible to set down in black and white the exact sums which were paid or received for political or other services during the four years of their government. Neither briber nor bribed deposited their accounts in the public archives, or entered them in their diaries or memoirs. There is, however, one incident in the history of the Directory which was officially published to the world in two printed messages from President Adams. In 1796 disputes arose between the Directory and the government of the United States respecting American vessels captured by French privateers which led to the recall of the United States Minister. In October, 1797, three American Commissioners were sent to reopen negotiations, at their head Charles Pinckney, one of the most honourable of American statesmen. Talleyrand, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, at first through intermediaries, afterwards in person, demanded for himself a "gratification" of £50,000 and for the Directors a loan of 32,000,000 Dutch florins (about £2,660,000). The American

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Commissioners rejected these modest demands, and were ordered to leave France.

To this may be added the following instances. Lord Malmesbury, when negotiating for peace at Lille, received messages, "purporting," as he cautiously expresses it, to come from Barras, and offering to secure peace for a payment to Rewbell and himself of £500,000; Lord Malmesbury was also informed that the Portuguese Minister had paid to these two Directors about £400,000 as the price of the treaty signed in August, 1797. Barras, on evidence nearly if not quite conclusive, is said to have demanded from the Venetian envoys before the fall of Venice upwards of £20,000 for his ineffectual support. Talleyrand, on less trustworthy testimony, is stated to have received during the two years of his ministry about £60,000 in bribes from foreign Powers. What proportion of the immense exactions levied on invaded countries — Belgium, Holland, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland — found its way into the pockets of the Directors and their Ministers, officers, and Commissaries, cannot even be conjectured; enough has been said to justify the assertion that the Directory was one of the most corrupt governments known to history.

Such was the Executive Government of the Republic. The legislative power lay in the hands of the *Corps Législatif*, whose constitution is described in a previous chapter. The despotic power of the Convention had been due chiefly to their permanent Committees and to the representatives whom they sent on missions. The *Corps Législatif* was therefore forbidden to appoint any standing Committee or to send any representative to the Provinces or the army. No member of either Chamber could hold any executive office. The Councils could not be dissolved or adjourned by the Directory; they could under certain circumstances adjourn themselves, but neither Chamber could do so for more than five days without the consent of the other. To the *Anciens* alone belonged the power of changing the place of meeting.

In the vain hope of preventing the formation of parties within the Chambers, a clause of the Law of September 14, 1795, enacted that a separate chair and desk should be provided for each member; and these were ordered to be balloted for once a month, so that no two members, except by accident, should sit next to each other for more than four weeks. It is not improbable that this device was one of the principal causes of the ease with which the *Corps Législatif* was overcome by the Directors in September, 1797; it certainly accounts for the want of cohesion which marked their proceedings, the contradictory speeches made by members supposed to be acting together, and the curious manner in which resolutions passed one day were repealed or altered on the morrow. The Chambers were renewed each year by the retirement of one-third of the members by ballot; members retiring for the first time could be re-elected for a second term, but no member could

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sit for more than six years consecutively. Each Chamber elected its own President and Secretary for a period of one month. The sittings opened at noon and, except at critical periods, when a vote of permanence was passed, rose at 4 p.m. Before September 4, 1797 (18 Fructidor, An v), the Chambers met every day of the week; after that date they held no sittings on the *décadi*. The salary of each member amounted to about 30 fr. per day. A curious costume, burlesqued from ancient Greek models, was assigned to the members; but this was not adopted until after September, 1797, when its use became compulsory.

The Directory and the *Corps Législatif* were divided into two parties, the Constitutionalists and the Revolutionists. The Constitutional party was composed of nearly all the two hundred and fifty members of the new Third and of many members of the Right of the Convention, of two Directors, Carnot and Letourneur, and of the majority of the magistrates and other officials elected in 1795. It had the support of the electors and of the great mass of the people. Its adherents could consequently hope in two or at most in three years' time to be in a majority in the Legislative Body, and consequently to replace the existing Directors, as they retired, by members of their own party. In fact, nothing but fair play was needed to make them masters of the future of France. By the opposite party the Constitutionalists were vehemently accused of enmity to the Republic and of open or concealed royalism; and, as this accusation was the ground of their destruction, it is essential to the history of the failure of the Constitution and the consequent fall of the Republic to enquire how far the charge was true. Of the fervent semi-religious loyalty to the Crown, which had been the ruling motive of the old *régime* even in its period of decadence, hardly a trace remained, except in the western Departments; nor were there more than a handful of persons in France who cherished a personal devotion towards the stout personality of Louis XVIII or the doubtful audacity of the Comte d'Artois. If Louis XVII had survived, it is possible that the members of the Right of the Convention might have attempted to found a constitutional monarchy with a council of regency chosen among themselves. There were probably many who, if driven to choose between a constitutional sovereign and a return of the Terror, would have accepted the King as the lesser of two evils; and a few who in theory preferred a constitutional Monarchy to a Republic. Thibaudeau names, in the *Corps Législatif*, fifteen who were of this opinion, but adds that not one of them had any invincible repugnance to the Republic.

The elections of 1797 added to the number of these constitutional Monarchists. If it were possible to imagine a vote taken in the two Chambers on the substitution of a constitutional sovereign for the Directors, about twenty would have voted in its favour before the elections of 1797, perhaps as many as forty after these elections: had the proposition been to restore the French monarchy as it stood before the

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Revolution, neither before nor after 1797 would a single voice have been raised in its support. The term "Royalist" was in fact used by the one party, as the terms "Jacobin" and "anarchist" were by the other, as the common form of abuse. To quote Thibaudeau once more: "A man treated with injustice complains — he is a Royalist; a writer censures an act of the government — he is a Royalist; a journalist criticises a public official — he is a Royalist." The real aims of the Constitutional party had nothing to do with the re-establishment of any form of monarchy. They were to put an end to the war and to bring the Constitution into full force; and in order to achieve this it was above all things necessary to repeal the Law of October 25, 1795 (3 Brumaire). This law, the result of the insurrection of the Paris Sections and the consequent return of the Thermidorians to Jacobinism, renewed the revolutionary laws against the clergy and the relatives of *émigrés*; and, so long as it remained in force, the Constitution was crippled by the exclusion of large classes of French citizens from all rights and all protection.

The Revolutionary party was composed of three members of the Directory, Rewbell, Larevellière-Lépeaux, and Barras, of most of the Ministers, notably the most powerful of them, Merlin of Douai, of the Commissaries and other officials appointed by the Directory, and of the majority of the ex-members of the Convention in the *Corps Législatif*. Their policy was to continue the war, to maintain the Law of October 25, and generally to uphold the revolutionary system of government. Their guiding motive was not so much revolutionary enthusiasm or political principle as self-preservation; they desired to prolong the era of persecution and ostracism as the surest way of saving their own heads from peril; as regicides they dreaded the return of the monarchy, as Terrorists they feared the vengeance of the people.

The most important question, that on which all others turned, was whether the war should be continued or a general peace concluded. It could no longer be maintained that France was carrying on the war in defence of her territory. Peace had been already signed with Prussia in 1795, and with Spain in 1796; Belgium had been incorporated in the French Republic by the decree of October 1, 1795, which formed the whole of the Austrian Netherlands into nine Departments of France. Holland was a vassal ally. Austria on land and England on the sea were now the only serious adversaries of France. England had no intention of deserting her ally, but Pitt and his colleagues were prepared to make great sacrifices to secure peace. In his Message to Parliament on October 29, 1795, George III had expressed his hope that a settled government might result from the new French Constitution, with which it might be possible to treat. During the winter of 1795–6 Pitt and Lord Grenville had been earnest in their endeavours to induce the Austrian government to join Great Britain in negotiating for peace. The Austrian Ministers however were persuaded that the Directors had

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no intention of coming to terms, nor were they yet prepared to abandon their claims to the Belgian Provinces. No further steps were taken until October, 1796, when Lord Malmesbury was sent to Paris with instructions to insist on the restoration of Belgium to Austria as a preliminary of peace. This was flatly refused by the Directory; and Lord Malmesbury was ordered to leave Paris on December 19.

The design of the campaign of 1796 was to attack Austria from the north and south at once. The Army of Italy under Bonaparte advancing northward across the Alps was to join hands with the Army of the Rhine under Moreau advancing from Strassburg, and with the Army of the Sambre-et-Meuse under Jourdan advancing from the Rhine Provinces. Bonaparte, the story of whose victories in Italy will be told in a subsequent chapter, succeeded beyond the wildest expectations; but for the moment the general plan of campaign fell through, owing to the failure of the northern armies. Early in June Moreau conveyed his army of 70,000 men across the Rhine at Kehl; and at the same time Jourdan, at the head of 45,000 troops, crossed the river at Neuwied. The Archduke Charles, commanding an army of 150,000 men, fell back before the advancing French, until towards the end of August, when Jourdan had captured Würzburg and Moreau was fast advancing upon Munich.

Then the Archduke, adopting the system by which Bonaparte was carrying all before him in Italy, sprang upon Jourdan before he could effect a junction with the Army of the Rhine and drove him backwards by a series of attacks, at Amberg on August 24, at Würzburg on September 2, at Aschaffenburg on the 13th, and at Altenkirchen on the 19th. It was here that General Marceau fell into the Archduke's hands mortally wounded — a heavy blow to France, for Marceau shared with Hoche the reputation of being not only a commander of brilliant audacity but a man of honourable and generous character. On September 20 Jourdan recrossed the Rhine between Bonn and Neuwied. His army had suffered terribly, having lost nearly half its number in action, from hunger, disease, or assassination by the peasantry whom the soldiers had plundered ruthlessly during their advance. When the Archduke left his lieutenant, General Latour, with a small force before Moreau, he said, "Let him advance to Vienna if he can, it matters nothing provided I beat Jourdan." But Moreau, though at the head of a fine army, finding himself without supports and far from his base, was soon obliged to retreat; he achieved his return to Strassburg in perfect order.

Early in the same year 1796, Hoche, as much by statesmanship and toleration as by military skill, completed the pacification of the Vendée and set the great army, which for three years had been locked up in western France, free to reinforce the armies of Italy and the Rhine. After sending large reinforcements to each of these, Hoche himself with 15,000 men embarked in seventeen ships of the line with a number of

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frigates and transports and a distinguished passenger, Wolfe Tone, for Bantry Bay. A series of gales broke up the fleet; and by January 1, 1797, the expedition had returned to Brest without landing a man and with the loss of five ships. But the failure of Hoche's expedition and of the campaign in Germany were more than counterbalanced by the conquest of Italy and by the treaty with Spain, which doubled the number of ships and seamen to be brought into action against England. The triumph of this treaty was however of short duration, for on February 14 Sir John Jervis' victory off Cape St Vincent put the Spanish fleet out of reckoning.

In the spring of 1797 Hoche, who had succeeded Jourdan in command of the Army of the Sambre-et-Meuse, recrossed the Rhine and defeated the Austrians at Neuwied on April 18. Moreau also, after retaking Kehl, was in full advance when both armies were suddenly checked by the news that on the day of Hoche's victory Bonaparte had signed the preliminaries of a peace with Austria at Leoben, which after six months of negotiation led to the Treaty of Campo Formio, October 17, 1797.

To secure the general peace it was now necessary only to come to terms with Great Britain and with Portugal. With Portugal a treaty was signed on August 10, leaving Great Britain without a single ally in Europe. Pitt had been anxious for peace in 1795 and 1796; he was still more anxious now. The mutiny at the Nore, the threatened rebellion of Ireland, the fall of Consols to forty-eight, were overpowering arguments against continuing the war single-handed. In July, 1797, Lord Malmesbury was again sent to France to treat at Lille with three French plenipotentiaries, the chief of whom was Maret, the future Duc de Bassano. The English government was prepared to recognise all the French conquests in Europe and to restore the captured French colonies, retaining only the Cape of Good Hope taken from the Dutch and Trinidad taken from the Spaniards. Belgium had been the crux of Lord Malmesbury's first mission; the Cape became that of his second. The French absolutely demanded its restoration to Holland. Carnot, in his reply to Bailleul, tells of a conversation with Rewbell which fully explains the motive of the French anxiety on behalf of their ally. "Do you suppose," said Rewbell, "that it is for the sake of the Dutch that I demand the restitution of the Cape? The first object is to recover it, for which we require Dutch ships and money; that object once achieved, I will soon convince the Dutch that these colonies belong not to them but to ourselves." In the main, however, the hopes of peace depended, not on questions of detail, but on the results of the deadlock caused by the struggle between the two French parties. If the Constitutionalists won, peace was assured; if they were beaten, there was small hope of it. The *coup d'état* of September 4 settled the question; and twelve days later Lord Malmesbury received orders to quit France within twenty-four

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hours. Years afterwards Carnot, referring to these negotiations, said, "If my advice had been followed we should have made peace under conditions which can never occur again"; and he spoke truly, for no peace made afterwards, with the exception of the short-lived Peace of Amiens, has left France with so large a territory or so great a prestige.

But there were considerations in the minds of the three Directors and their supporters which convinced them that in war lay their sole security. France was now maintaining armies in the field consisting of over a quarter of a million of men. These men, the flower of the nation, were armed, fed, and clothed by Europe; far from being a burden on France, they formed the one financial resource of the country; money, plate, objects of art, poured into France and would continue to do so while the war lasted. But how in time of Peace could these enormous armies be paid or fed for a month? What if they demanded the *milliard* (£40,000,000) promised to them by the Convention? And, even if the armies allowed themselves to be disbanded, what was to be done with the generals? Would men like Bonaparte, and Hoche, and fifty more of the ablest officers whom France had ever possessed, be content to vegetate on half-pay? "Do you suppose," said Napoleon to Miot de Melito, "that I am winning fame in Italy for the glorification of the attorneys of the Directory? Let them try to remove me from my command and they will soon see what will happen."

These considerations go far to account for the eagerness with which the Directory welcomed Bonaparte's proposal to take the finest regiments of the army to Egypt, as well as the recklessness with which, before the ink was dry on the Treaty of Campo Formio, they began to send armies to revolutionise and plunder Switzerland and Italy. They must have foreseen that these predatory expeditions would lead to the renewal of a general war; but of this they had little fear. What they did fear from the bottom of their souls was peace.

The consideration of the attitude of the two parties towards the war has made it necessary to refer to events which occurred at a period subsequent to the first year of the Directory; we must now return to the hardly less vital questions which divided the Revolutionary from the Constitutional party in the internal affairs of France — the financial position, the religious difficulty, and the legislation on the *émigrés*.

The history of the finances, of the daily fall in the value of Assignats, and of the ultimate bankruptcy, are told in a later chapter of this volume: allusion only can be made here to the increasing financial embarrassments of the Treasury, the fortunes made by speculators and contractors, the general dishonesty fostered, almost necessitated, by the uncertainty of the currency; all essential elements in the history of the Directory. The other questions, religion and the *émigrés*, must be dealt with somewhat more in detail.

It need hardly be said that the religious difficulty became acute in

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1791, when the great majority of ecclesiastics refused to take the oath of conformity to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The persecution which followed had driven most of them from France; of those who remained no exact statistics are obtainable. It is known only that forty-one of the Bishops were dead, and that eleven who had lived concealed in France during the Terror were alive in November, 1795. During the Thermidorian reaction, laws were passed in September, 1794, and in May, 1795, granting, on paper at least, freedom of worship, and restoring to the use of any form of religious observance desired by the people such churches as had not been appropriated to State purposes or sold to private purchasers. By twos and threes the clergy had been returning from abroad or had been creeping from their hiding-places, and were now often officiating in their former parishes. A statement in the *Annales de la Religion* in July, 1797, estimates that public services were then being held in 31,214 communes in the country, while forty-one churches were open and crowded with worshippers in Paris.

Under the government of the Directory the legal position of a priest who had not taken the "civic oath" in 1791 was as follows. Article 354 of the Constitution decreed that no one should be prevented from the exercise of the religion of his choice. On the other hand the Law of October 25, 1795, ordered that the laws against priests transported or liable to transportation (that is to say, every member of the orthodox clergy) should be immediately put in force; meaning simply that every priest who had returned to France was liable to be executed on identification, and every priest who had remained in France to be transported for life. The orthodox Roman Church was the form of religion desired by nine out of ten Christians in France; yet, while by the Constitution these were free to adopt its services, the priest who ministered to them was, in the eye of the law, a "wolf's-head." After the *coup d'état* of September, 1797, every priest was in fact, as well as in theory, in daily peril; before that period the law remained nearly a dead letter, only twenty priests losing their lives. But for this clemency the Directory were not to blame; in one of their first circulars they urged their commissaries to "wear out the patience of the priests; not to give them a moment of ease; never to lose sight of these instruments of murder, royalism, and anarchy." In the *Corps Législatif* the Constitutionalists made repeated efforts to repeal the law of October 25, but until the elections of 1797 they had not a sufficient majority to effect this: the clergy were, however, defended in both Chambers by such men as Thibaudeau, Lanjuinais, Portalis, Barbé-Marbois, Boissy d'Anglas, and many others. Few of these were Christians in belief or sympathy, but they could understand the folly of ineffectual persecution and the object-lesson given by Hoche, who was pacifying the Vendée as much by treating the clergy with common justice as by force of arms.

The remnant of the Constitutional Church, since the complete

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severance of Church and State known as the "National Church," formed the only other considerable religious body in France. Of the eighty-two constitutional Bishops elected in 1791, forty still remained in some exercise of their functions; of the remainder eight had been guillotined, thirteen had died natural deaths, and twenty-one had abandoned their Orders; of the clergy a large proportion had married, secularised themselves, or rejoined the orthodox Roman Church.

On this body, which had little ground for desiring a change of government, the Directors shed a cold and lack-lustre patronage. They allowed its clergy to share with the Theophilanthropists the use of Notre Dame, and even to hold a National Council. But the Constitutional Church had little hold on the mind of the people; its churches and its coffers were empty; and had it not been for the influence of Bishop Grégoire, one of the most courageous, interesting and paradoxical characters of the Revolution, it would hardly have remained in existence until the close of the century.

Owing to the fact that Larevellière-Lépeaux was its patron if not its apostle, the curious creed and worship of the Theophilanthropists obtained a momentary notoriety during the Directory. This was a form of natural religion founded by David Williams, an English Deist, in 1766, which failed in England, but found in France a certain number of eminent disciples, such as Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Marie-Joseph Chénier, Creuzé-Latouche, David the painter, and Dupont of Nemours. Its tenets consisted of elegant extracts from the teaching of the English Deists, and from Zoroaster, Socrates, Seneca, Fénelon, Voltaire, and above all Rousseau. Its ritual, celebrated on the *décadi*, was composed of an invocation to the God of Nature, an examination of conscience, hymns, sermons, and readings from the sages named above, together with special services for baptisms, marriages, and funerals. The Directors appropriated eighteen churches in Paris to its use; but, as soon as the novelty wore off, it dwindled to a handful of supporters who were finally excluded from the "national edifices" in 1801. The official religion of the Directory, consisting of the observances of the *décadi* and the moral and patriotic *fêtes*, existed rather in theory than in practice until the *coup d'état* of September, 1797; after that date, as will be seen, it became a very stern reality.

Perhaps no passage in the history of the Revolution is so complicated as that of the laws relative to the *émigrés*; assuredly none has been so persistently misrepresented by partisan writers.

The *émigration* began in 1789, with consequences as disastrous to the *émigrés* themselves as to the country they abandoned. Between October, 1792, and the dissolution of the Convention, upwards of three hundred laws had been passed relating to the *émigrés* themselves and their relatives. By this mass of legislation each commune was instructed to frame lists of the *émigrés* within its borders and to forward them to

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the Committee of Legislation of the Convention, who alone had the power to erase names from these lists. For a time the lists were drawn up with some care and published by the Committee; but under the Terror all method died out, and from early in 1793 to the end of the Directory the lists grew and multiplied, unexamined and unrevised. Each person on these lists was an *émigré*; and as such he or she was condemned to perpetual banishment, loss of all civil rights, confiscation of property, and death within twenty-four hours after identification, if found on French soil.

Nor was it only the *émigrés* who were condemned. Their relatives were formed into an ostracised class, deprived of civil rights, obliged to live under police supervision, liable to a number of special fines and taxes, bound to furnish an account of whatever property the *émigré* their relative was heir to, and to hand over such property or to effect a compromise with the government, which was held to be in immediate possession of the *émigré's* succession. An *émigré* is popularly taken to be a person, usually a member of the old *noblesse*, who had fled from France and taken arms against his country or assisted her enemies; in fact a rebel or a traitor and as such liable to punishment. Such no doubt was the original *émigré* against whom the earlier laws were directed; but to this class belonged only a small fraction of those inscribed on the lists at the close of the year 1795. In 1799 the army of Condé was composed of 1007 officers and 5840 rank and file; it had never consisted of more than 10,000; to double this number would be to overstate those who had fought against France or had in any way assisted foreign Powers against her. But the number of persons on the lists of *émigrés* vastly exceeded 20,000, and included many thousands of men and women who had never in their lives crossed the frontier. The number can never be accurately known. In a message of February 26, 1797, the Directory state the number in the incomplete lists in their hands as 120,000, of whom 60,000 were known to be in France. In May, 1796, Portalis asserted that more than 100,000 fathers of families who had never left France were on the lists of *émigrés*; in the same debate it was stated that the number of relations of *émigrés* liable to confiscation was 300,000. Finally, in 1800, the Minister of Police reported that the number still on the lists in his hands amounted to 145,000. Recklessness, wholesale proscription, local and personal jealousy, had contrived to form this immense class of *émigrés*. At different periods of the Terror the inhabitants of Lyons, Marseilles, and Bordeaux had been declared *émigrés*; from Nantes, Toulon, Orange, Avignon, Strassburg, and many other places, thousands had fled to escape the Revolutionary Commissions, and these were *émigrés*. In many communes all proprietors not actually present when the lists were drawn up were entered as *émigrés*. Thus the great mathematician, Monge, when Minister of the Navy, discovered that he was on the list of the Department of the Ardennes,

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and that a farm in that Department belonging to his wife had been put up for sale as national property. André Dumont, speaking in the Council of Five Hundred, tells of a friend, a zealous Republican, who had acted as Mayor of his native town for years without knowing that he was on the list of *émigrés* of a neighbouring commune.

That such a system should have lasted for a week after a regular government had been established seems at first sight impossible; but the explanation is simple. Vast interests depended on the maintenance of the laws against the *émigrés*. Their property, with that of the clergy and the national domains, formed the security on which the assignats were issued, and many thousands of purchasers had been found for their confiscated estates. If a general amnesty were granted and the *émigrés* were allowed to reclaim their lands and houses, the assignats would become waste-paper and the whole social fabric would fall to pieces. So impossible was it to escape from this vicious circle, that the Constitution decreed that *émigrés* not included in exceptions already allowed should be banished for ever from France and that their property belonged to the Republic. The Constitutional party, while acknowledging the iniquity of the whole system, did not dare to advocate its complete abolition. They endeavoured only to repeal the Law of October 25 (3 Brumaire), which deprived the relatives of *émigrés* of all civil rights and ordered them to live under police supervision. They also endeavoured to place the duty of removing names from the lists in the hands of the tribunals or of a committee of the *Corps Législatif*; but the Conventional majority before the elections of 1797 was too strong. The Law of October 25 remained, and the power of erasure was entrusted to the Directors and the Minister of Justice. This power fell practically into the hands of Barras and Merlin of Douai; and consequently none but those with a long purse could hope for justice. The number removed before September, 1797, was about 15,000; between that date and the end of the Directory very few names were erased.

The discussion of these questions and of the financial difficulties of the Republic occupied the greater part of the time of the *Corps Législatif* before the elections of 1797. Outside the Chambers, the principal events were the exchange of "*la fille Capet*," daughter of Louis XVI, for the eight deputies and officers delivered to the Austrians by Dumouriez in April, 1793, and the conspiracies of Babeuf and Brottier.

In February, 1796, the Directors ordered the closing of a number of clubs. Most of these, the so-called Royalist clubs, were little more than gambling or dancing saloons; but one, the club of the Panthéon, was of a widely different order. It had four thousand members and formed a place of refuge for the Terrorists and Jacobins of Paris and of those who were driven from the Provinces to take refuge in the capital. In this club existed an esoteric circle calling themselves the *Société des*

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Égaux, the principal members of which were "Gracchus" Babeuf, editor of the *Tribun du Peuple*; Sylvain Maréchal, a well-known journalist; Drouet, one of those recently exchanged for Madame Royale; Antonelle, ex-noble and juryman of the Revolutionary Tribunal; Félix Le Peletier, a rich enthusiast; Buonarotti, president of the club; several ex-members of the Convention, including Robert Lindet, and Jean-Antoine Rossignol, and four other dismissed officers.

The closing of the club did not put an end to the Society, which met in cafés and private houses and developed the conspiracy known as that of Babeuf. The aims and methods of the conspirators may be thus briefly summarised. The Revolution had failed because the rich retained and increased their possessions, while the poor remained miserable. Another and final revolution was necessary to form an equitable system under which the land should belong to the State, its fruits to the people, where all should work and all should fare alike, and riches and poverty come to a perpetual end. The new Republic was to be governed by elected functionaries, whose duty it was to collect the produce of the land in storehouses and distribute it. Literature, art, and religion were to be proscribed, children to be brought up in common, towns to be destroyed, and all Frenchmen, dressed in the same costume, to inhabit villages. The first steps towards the establishment of this golden age are set forth in a document entitled the Act of Insurrection. The existing government was to be dissolved, the Directors killed, the members of the *Corps Législatif* delivered to the "judgment of the people," and all who opposed the insurrectionary committee exterminated.

These preliminary matters disposed of, a convention, consisting of sixty-eight members of the extreme Left of the late Convention and one approved patriot appointed to represent each Department by the insurrectionary committee, was to be summoned to establish liberty, equality, and the common happiness. Among the Jacobins and Terrorists the conspirators found many recruits; but they had sense enough to see that without a military force they were powerless. A number of agents were employed to gain over the soldiers of the Paris division by wild promises of money and plunder. At Grenelle was stationed the Legion of Police, a force six thousand strong recruited chiefly from the "Revolutionary Army," on which the conspirators mainly relied; but shortly before the insurrection was timed to break out, the Legion, which was in a semi-mutinous condition, was broken up, the more insubordinate disbanded, the rest incorporated with various regiments. Those who were dismissed mostly joined the conspirators; but the breaking up of the corps was a fatal blow to their plans.

One of the agents employed to corrupt the soldiers, Georges Grisel, revealed the conspiracy to Carnot and to Cochon, the recently appointed Minister of Police; and on May 10, 1796, the eve of the day appointed for the insurrection, the leaders were arrested. Eighteen escaped; the

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remainder, forty-six in number, were sent to Vendôme to be tried by a High Court of Justice specially constituted in accordance with the Constitution to try cases of high treason. One of the prisoners, Drouet, was a member of the *Corps Législatif*, and in accordance with the Constitution could be tried only after a decree of accusation had been passed by the Chambers. This was carried; but Drouet escaped from the Abbaye with the connivance of the Directors, as Barras, probably for once speaking the truth, avers.

On September 7 a body of armed insurgents marched on the camp at Grenelle hoping to find sympathisers among the troopers of the 21st Dragoons, into which regiment members of the Legion of Police had been drafted. They were disappointed, for Malo, the commandant of the regiment, charged them, killing many and taking 132 prisoners, who were tried by a military Commission. Thirty-two, including Javogues, ex-member of the Convention, and Huguet, ex-Constitutional Bishop, were sentenced to be shot; twenty-seven to be transported, and the remainder to be discharged. The High Court began its sittings on February 20, 1797, and after a trial lasting for two months sentenced Babeuf and Darthé to death, Buonarotti and six others to transportation, and acquitted the rest. It was generally held at the time that Barras, and perhaps Rewbell, had been in communication with Babeuf and his friends, and that their hands were forced by the information given by Grisel to Carnot and Cochon. The evidence in favour of this belief is too lengthy to be given here; it is not conclusive, but is curiously strengthened by the sympathetic tone in which Barras writes of the conspirators, and by his denunciations of Cochon and Grisel. It is not improbable that the two Directors hoped to play with Babeuf, and to use his party against the *Corps Législatif* at the critical moment.

A second conspiracy, this time a royalist movement, was discovered on January 30, 1797, when the Abbé Brottier, the royalist agent in Paris, La Villeheurnois, an ex-Magistrate, Duverne de Presle, and Baron de Poly, with nine other men and five women, were arrested. The conspirators had attempted to seduce Malo, the officer who had dispersed the insurgents at Grenelle, and Ramel, commandant of the guard of the *Corps Législatif*, who, while pretending to listen, kept the Directors informed of the progress of the plot.

The evidence as given by Malo revealed simply a foolish attempt to copy the methods of Babeuf. A sufficient military force was to be secured, the barriers, arsenals, and public buildings to be seized, the existing government to be dissolved, and Louis XVIII to be proclaimed. This evidence did not satisfy the Directors' desire to prove their favourite thesis, that royalists and anarchists were one and the same. Nothing but the facts could be had from Malo, but Ramel allowed himself to put into the mouth of Poly statements to the effect that the royal mercy would be freely extended to the Terrorists of 1793, while the

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constitutionalists of 1789 would feel the full weight of royal vengeance. Lafayette was to be brought to Paris in an iron cage, and death or the galleys awaited the members of the Constituent Assembly.

The Directors, thinking that a military tribunal would make shorter work of the conspirators than a civil Court, sent the prisoners before a military commission, to be tried for seducing soldiers from their duty. The accused appealed against the competence of this commission and the Court of Appeal decided in their favour; but the Directors were peremptory, and the trial continued. The Commissary of the Directory demanded a sentence of death against all the prisoners; but the commission, moved by a sense of its own illegality and perhaps by doubts of the truth of Ramel's testimony, passed sentences of imprisonment for various terms against Brottier, Duverne de Presle, La Villeheurnois, and Poly, and acquitted the others. The Directors showed their disappointment by arranging to send five of the prisoners before a civil Court on the charge of treason. A delay occurred in consequence of the offer of Duverne de Presle to produce "revelations" implicating members of the *Corps Législatif*; and, after the *coup d'état* of September, 1797, the prisoners were ultimately transported to Cayenne.

In March and April, 1797, came the first renewal of the Directory and *Corps Législatif*. Two hundred and sixteen ex-members of the Convention, chosen by ballot, retired; most of them stood for re-election by the constituencies, but only eleven, including Boissy d'Anglas, were returned. The result of the elections was to give the Constitutionalists a working majority in both Chambers; and the Directors were thus brought face to face with a hostile legislature which they could neither dissolve nor adjourn. No legal course but submission lay before them; and, to put their case fairly, such submission was not without danger. They represented the Convention, and especially the regicides. If they resigned or ceased to govern, they could no longer protect the Conventionalists or the great body of Jacobins whom they had appointed to office. On May 20 the new members took their seats, and on the 27th elected Barthélemy as Director in succession to Letourneur, whose retirement by ballot was considered to have been arranged beforehand.

Barthélemy had long held the position of French Minister in Switzerland and had successfully negotiated the Peace with Prussia in 1795; but he had little practical experience of the actual state of France and was rather an excellent than a strong man. He acted uniformly in concert with Carnot, replacing Letourneur politically as well as officially. The Constitutionalist majority was hardly a homogeneous body: it tended towards the formation of an extreme and a central party. The extreme members, most powerful in the Council of Five Hundred, were led by Boissy d'Anglas, Pichegru, de La Rue, and Camille Jordan, newly returned as one of the deputies of Lyons. They placed themselves in direct hostility to the three Directors, and desired the immediate

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repeal of all revolutionary laws. Some of the members of this party founded a political society known as the *Club de Clichy*, and hence the term *Clichien* became the nickname by which members of the Constitutional party were known, though in reality only a small number of them were actually members.

The "Centre," strongest in the Council of the *Anciens*, and represented by such men as Tronçon-Ducoudray, Siméon, Mathieu Dumas, Barbé-Marbois, Portalis, and Thibaudeau, were in favour of a gradual modification of the revolutionary laws, and desired to compromise with the majority of the Directors, respecting their office and looking forward to a peaceable termination of the existing deadlock by the gradual replacement of the revolutionary members.

The Directorial or Conventional party was also composed of two wings, a left central and a Jacobin section. Most of its more distinguished members joined the *Cercle Constitutionnel*, a club recently founded in opposition to the *Clichy*, under the influence of Sieyès, Madame de Staël, Benjamin Constant, and Talleyrand.

During the period between May 20 and September 4 the *Corps Législatif* was again chiefly occupied with the questions of the *émigrés* and the clergy. The clauses of the Law of October 25, 1795, relating to the relatives of *émigrés*, were repealed; and several deputies who had been rendered by this law incapable of sitting were allowed to take their seats. A commission was appointed to consider the question of religious freedom. On June 17 Camille Jordan made his celebrated report, which, with some modifications, formed the basis of a law passed on September 1 by which such communes as desired the services of a priest were declared at liberty to choose one, and the priest thus chosen was, after making a declaration of submission to the Republic, to be secured from legal prosecution; churches not otherwise disposed of could be appropriated to public worship: but no ecclesiastic might wear a distinctive costume, no religious ceremonies might take place outside the churches, and no endowments might be given or bequeathed to any religious body. This law, which was repealed immediately after the *coup d'état* of September, 1797, was put forward as one of the most obvious proofs of a "royalist conspiracy."

While these measures were being debated the anxiety and alarm of the members of the Constitutional party were daily increasing. Three of their leaders, Portalis, Siméon, and Dumas, were deputed to represent to Barras the possibility of a reconciliation founded on the dismissal of the four Ministers, Merlin, Delacroix, Ramel de Nogaret, and Truguet, who were obnoxious to the Councils, and their replacement by men of more moderate opinions. Barras received the deputation with cordiality; but when on July 16 Carnot, acting in concert with the members of the Councils, proposed the change, he found that Barras had concerted with Rewbell and Larevellière to dismiss not the revolutionary but the

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moderate Ministers in whom the Councils had full confidence. The removal of Delacroix and Truguet was agreed to, nor did Carnot and Barthélemy object to the appointment of Talleyrand to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or of Pléville Le Pelay to the Ministry of the Navy; but the retention of the two Revolutionary Ministers, Merlin and Ramel, and the dismissal of the three Constitutionalists, Bénézech, Petiet, and Cochon, formed a final breech between the two and the three Directors, accentuated by the appointment of François de Neufchâteau to the Interior, Lenoir Laroche (replaced after a few days by Sotin) to the Police, and Schérer, a special *protégé* of Rewbell, to the Ministry of War.

From this time forward there could be little doubt of the ultimate designs of the three Directors. Hoche, with a view to another invasion of England, was leading towards Brest a force of 12,000 men, detached from his army on the Rhine, and Barras had engaged him to turn this force in the direction of Paris. In this negotiation Barras seems to have been acting on his own account, for when intelligence reached the Directory and Councils that Hoche's army was being brought within the distance from the *Corps Législatif* forbidden by the Constitution, and he was himself summoned and severely cross-examined by Carnot, then President of the Directory, the general obtained no countenance from Barras, who sat by, indifferently reading or pretending to read his papers. Angry and ill, Hoche withdrew and took no further active share in the coming struggle. His day was in fact over. On September 19 he died, leaving Bonaparte, his only equal in reputation and genius, without a rival.

Then the three Directors turned to Bonaparte. Rumours of the cession of Venice to Austria had led to heated debates in the Council of the Five Hundred, in the course of which several deputies, notably Dumolard, the ever fluent haranguer, attacked Bonaparte, justly no doubt, but fatally; for Bonaparte was wavering between the two parties, and these philippics either weighed down the balance on the side of the Directory, or gave him the pretext he desired. He issued a fiery proclamation to the Army of Italy on the *fête* of July 14 and encouraged inflammatory addresses against the royalist conspirators of Clichy. Swiftly following words by action, Bonaparte sent Augereau to Paris on urgent private affairs. He took care to warn the three Directors that Augereau was an excellent soldier but a turbulent politician — a warning which Augereau himself lost no time in justifying. Blazing with jewels, he pranced through Paris, loudly announcing that he had come to kill the royalists, and filled the minds of Rewbell and Larevellière with apprehensions that he and Barras were planning a *coup d'état* on their own account.

It is difficult to account for Carnot's conduct during these critical weeks. He was urged to place himself at the head of a counter-movement and to organise an attack upon the Directory; but, either

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from weariness or from a conviction that the Directors would not dare to attack him, he remained inactive and added to the indecision, doubt, and dread of illegality, which paralysed the majority of the Chambers. Pichegru, Willot, and the more energetic spirits, could find no followers. Some fled, others debated on organising the National Guard and increasing the strength of their own small body of troops; but practically nothing was done, and the Constitutional party fell without striking a single blow.

On the evening of September 3 the three members of the Directory constituted themselves in permanent session and despatched orders to Moreau, whose army had sent no addresses and whose fidelity they distrusted, to return to Paris. They then drew up a proclamation announcing that a royalist conspiracy had been frustrated at the critical moment, and that a great host of *émigrés*, assassins from Lyons, and brigands from the Vendée, had attacked the posts which surrounded the Directory, but that their criminal efforts had been defeated by the vigilance of the government. This proclamation, accompanied by extracts from the papers taken by Bonaparte from the royalist agent d'Entraigues inculpating Pichegru and Imbert-Colomès, was posted throughout Paris during the night. Barthélemy was arrested in his bed, and indignantly refusing offers of escape on condition that he would sign his resignation, was sent to the Temple. Carnot, warned at the last moment, slipped quietly through the Luxembourg Gardens and ultimately escaped to Switzerland.

At three o'clock in the morning of September 4 (18 Fructidor, An v), Augereau with 2000 men advanced on the Tuileries, meeting with no opposition from the Guard of the *Corps Législatif*, and arrested Ramel, Commandant of the Guard, Pichegru, Willot, and a number of other Deputies, most of whom were members of the Commission of Inspectors charged with the protection of the Councils.

At seven o'clock the Presidents of the two Councils, Lafon-Ladébat and Siméon, accompanied by about fifty members, attempted to open the day's sittings, but were ejected. They removed to the house of Lafon-Ladébat, whither they were followed by an officer of Augereau's staff, who arrested several and dispersed the remainder. When asked by what law he dared to arrest the Representatives of the People he replied with simple truth, "By the law of the sword." The Members of the Directorial party met at 9 a.m., the *Anciens* in the École de Santé, the Five Hundred in the Odéon theatre. There they declared themselves in permanent session, appointed a Commission of Five, including Sieyès and Boulay of the Meurthe, and sat throughout the day awaiting the orders of their masters, not knowing whether their colleagues of yesterday were to be tried, shot off-hand, or transported. At six in the evening the first message was received from the Directory; and Boulay was able to announce that the "Triumph of the Republic was not to be

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stained by blood." During the night of September 4 and the following day they sat surrounded by soldiers and by a disorderly rabble, intimidated by threatening messages from the Directors, and in the hot haste of terror produced the Law of September 5 (19 Fructidor).

By this law all the elections of 49 Departments, returning 154 Members, were annulled, and the Directors were charged to appoint all the magistrates and officials in these departments until the elections of 1798. Fifty-three persons were ordered to be immediately transported to such place as the Directors should fix; among these were the two Directors, Carnot and Barthélemy, thirty-eight members of the *Corps Législatif*, Cochon, ex-Minister of Police, Generals Pichegru, Miranda, and Morgan, the Abbé Brottier and two of his associates. The Law of October 25, 1795 (3 Brumaire, An IV), was re-enacted with an additional clause (added in view of the possibility of peace with Austria and Great Britain) prolonging for four years after the general peace the disabilities attaching to the relatives of *émigrés*. All *émigrés* were ordered to leave France within a fortnight; any *émigré* remaining after this period was to be tried by a military commission and shot within twenty-four hours. The law recently passed on the Liberty of Worship was repealed; and every priest was ordered to take a special oath of hatred to royalty and anarchy. The Directors were empowered to transport, by an administrative order stating the reason of its issue, any priest who might disturb the public peace. All newspapers and newspaper presses were placed for one year under the inspection of the police. The power of proclaiming any commune in a state of siege was invested in the Directory.

On the next day, September 6, two new Directors, Merlin of Douai and François de Neufchâteau, were elected in place of Carnot and Barthélemy. Merlin, under the Consulate and Empire an eminent jurist, was as yet known only as the "author of the Law of the Suspect" and as a harsh and unscrupulous supporter of the Revolutionary system; François as a writer of dithyrambic plays with a passion for the observance of *fêtes* and *décadis*. Both were by profession *avocats*.

From the point of view of the three Directors nothing could have been more successful than their *coup d'état*. By a few hours of violence they had disposed of two hostile Directors and of more than two hundred members of the *Corps Législatif*, and had thus crushed all their opponents and erected for themselves a despotism which Louis XIV or the Committee of Public Safety might have envied.

But however successful a *coup d'état* may be, it requires some justification. The official explanation of that of 18 Fructidor is contained in the messages and proclamations of the Directory on September 4 and following days, in the speeches of their two chief spokesmen in the *Corps Législatif*, Boulay and Bailleul, in September, 1797, and in the elaborate report delivered by Bailleul in March, 1798, of a Commission appointed

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to enquire into the conspiracy. According to these authorities the measures taken by the three Directors were just in time to save France from the outbreak of a royalist conspiracy. Had they lingered for twenty-four hours, said the Directors in their first message to the *Corps Législatif*, "the Republic would have been betrayed to its mortal enemies." This "conspiracy" was formed by the members of the majority in the *Corps Législatif*, and was supported by the two Directors, Carnot and Barthélemy, by the condemned journalists, and by the returned *émigrés* and priests. The proofs of the imminent danger from which the Directors saved the Republic were taken from three sources; first, the declarations of Duverne de Presle, one of the colleagues of the Abbé Brottier, consisting of a series of vague accusations of no weight whatever; secondly, a number of papers taken by Bonaparte in Italy from a royalist agent, the Comte d'Entraigues, which contained some letters compromising Pichegru and Imbert-Colomès, deputy for Lyons; thirdly, the correspondence found in the carriage of the Austrian general Klinger by Moreau, which was not received by the Directors until after September 4.

Moreau's conduct with regard to this correspondence is somewhat of a mystery. The letters were discovered and deciphered in May, 1797, but for four months he kept them in his own hands. On the night of September 3 he was recalled; but, according to his own account, he was not aware of this until September 8. Meanwhile on September 5, or as he afterwards asserted on September 3, he forwarded the entire correspondence to Barthélemy. Why he kept it so long, and why he sent the letters to Barthélemy and not to the Minister of War, are questions which admit of no conclusive answer. The documents themselves, though containing no word in Pichegru's handwriting, prove that in the autumn of 1795 he had through the medium of a royalist agent, Fauche Borel, received proposals made to him by the Prince de Condé to surrender Hüningen, join the Prince with his army, and march with him on Paris, where Louis XVIII would be proclaimed King.

There was therefore a strong case against Pichegru, and a much weaker case against Imbert-Colomès; but against the two Directors, the members of the *Corps Législatif*, or the condemned generals, journalists, and others, there was no case whatever. As for a general conspiracy of all these persons to destroy the Republic, the charge rests solely on the accusation made by the Directors and their party. After months of research by a special committee, all that Bailleul could say was that it was so evident as to require no proof; to quote his own words: "We do not try to prove the existence of light, we analyse it." His long report is in fact devoted to hysterical diatribes on the iniquity of priests, *émigrés*, and journalists, to denunciations of Carnot as the defender of Kings, of Pastoret and Boissy d'Anglas as repealers of laws against *émigrés*, and so forth. Fortunately for Bailleul and his cause, opposition

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or criticism had been effectually silenced in the *Corps Législatif*; but he succeeded in drawing from Carnot his *Réponse au Rapport de J.-C. Bailleul*, the most authentic and interesting account extant of the working of the Constitution of 1795 and of the causes of its destruction.

Of the fifty-three persons condemned to transportation, fifteen only were in the hands of the Directors; many of the others had been arrested by Augereau's officers but in the absence of instructions had been allowed to go free; a few, among them Cochon, were subsequently captured; but the greater number escaped. During the night of September 9 Barthélemy, Lafon-Ladébat, General Murinais, Rovère, and Tronson de Coudray, of the *Anciens*; Aubry, Bourdon of the Oise, de La Rue, Pichegru, and Willot, of the Five Hundred; Ramel, Brottier, Villeheurnois, Dossonville—an officer of Police under Cochon—Suard—the well-known author—and Letellier—Barthélemy's valet, who refused to leave his master—were taken from the Temple and conveyed to Rochefort.

Vae Victis was one of the few unchanging revolutionary maxims. These were for the most part elderly men, who had held high office and done the State some service, and were now condemned to exile without trial. With a brutality which admits of no palliation they were carried across France in open iron cages on wheels, half starved and subjected to every form of insult and misery. On their arrival at Rochefort they were instantly transferred to a corvette and despatched on a voyage which lasted for more than seven weeks, during which time they lay in the bare hold fed on little more than mouldy biscuits and brackish water. After a short rest at Cayenne they were taken to a fever-stricken deserted village called Sinamary. Eight of the prisoners, Barthélemy, Pichegru, Aubry, de La Rue, Willot, Ramel, Dossonville, and Letellier, escaped in a canoe; Aubry and the brave valet Letellier died on the way; the others arrived after many adventures at Demerara, whence they were conveyed to England. Six of those who remained behind died within twelve months, two only, Lafon-Ladébat and Barbé-Marbois, survived and were brought back to France in 1799.

The new era of the Directory began by the removal of every magistrate and official in the forty-nine Departments in which the elections had been annulled, and by the substitution for them of ex-Conventionalists, Jacobins, and personal *protégés* of the Directors. In each district of France a military tribunal was instituted to identify and shoot *émigrés*. The working of these tribunals depended greatly on the spirit of the members of each; in some districts the persons arraigned had as fair a trial as possible, in others accusation and identification were followed by immediate death. When Bonaparte, already disgusted with the manner in which the Directors had used the victory which they owed to his aid, arrived at Toulon on his way to Egypt, he issued an order of the day on the conduct of the military tribunal of that town. The

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order begins thus: "I learn with profound grief that old men of seventy or eighty years, and women with young children have been shot on accusations of being *émigrés*; have the soldiers of liberty become executioners?" In the course of the two years, September, 1797, to November, 1799, about 160 persons were shot by order of these tribunals; a sinister commentary on the boasts of Boulay and Bailleul that "no blood had been spilt in consequence of the glorious victory of liberty."

But the swift death by a musket-ball was not to be compared to the sufferings of the unhappy prisoners who underwent the punishment of the *guillotine sèche*, the term by which transportation to Cayenne became known. Fortunately for humanity only a few shiploads of prisoners were actually despatched. The English cruisers were on the alert; they drove one ship dismasted back to Rochefort, and captured a second with twenty-five priests on board. After this, imprisonment on the islands of Ré and Oléron was substituted for transportation.

In all 363 prisoners, of whom 292 were priests, were sent to Cayenne. Of these 57 escaped or were rescued by the English; 187 died (mostly within a few months of their arrival); and 119 survived the Directory. On the islands 1212 priests and some hundreds of Bretons, journalists, and others, were imprisoned. As will be seen from these figures, the chief sufferers were priests. The Law of September 5, as has already been said, in addition to re-enacting the revolutionary laws against the clergy, gave to the Directors the power to transport, without any further ceremony than a statement of their reason, any priest whom they considered to have disturbed the public peace. It had been found impossible to compel the local authorities to enforce the laws against ecclesiastics, whom they were often more ready to protect than to persecute; but from Directors such as Larevellière, Merlin, or François, no priest could hope for mercy. Arrest followed the mention of his name or the most trivial complaint. The order sometimes set forth a definite offence, such as opposing the observance of the *décadi* or advocating Christian marriage; more often it ran in some such terms as these, "Seeing that A. B., priest, is a man of detestable morals and *fanaticises*." Constitutional priests were as liable as others; and many were transported or imprisoned for refusing to transfer their Sunday services to the *décadi*. A few Protestant ministers were also sentenced; and several ex-priests who had married and joined the "Anarchist" party found that the indelibility of Holy Orders was not a mere theological dogma. The total number of priests, against whom these *lettres de cachet* were issued between September, 1797, and November, 1799, has been calculated at 1726 in France and 8225 in Belgium. Nearly 8000 of the latter were condemned by orders in blank, issued after the rising against the conscription in 1798; the majority escaped, being befriended by the entire population; but all those captured were imprisoned in France or Belgium.

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It was not by persecution alone that the Directory attempted to destroy Christianity. At a time when the country was in imminent danger of invasion, when every industry required support, when financial disaster threatened to overwhelm the State, when the chaos of conflicting laws rendered the administration of justice almost impossible, the Directors and their Ministers made it the main object of their domestic policy to suppress the Christian Sundays and festivals and to substitute for them the observance of the *décadis* and republican *fêtes*. Their object is expressed clearly in these terms: "to destroy the influence of the Roman religion by substituting for worn-out impressions new ones more conformable to reason." To achieve this they issued laws, orders and circulars sufficient to fill volumes — the purport of all being to erect the *décadi* into a sort of Jewish Sabbath on which no Court, public office, shop, or factory, should be open, and no work publicly performed in town or country. All officials and school-children were ordered to attend on each *décadi* at the appointed meeting-place of the Commune, usually the parish church, where a function took place consisting of the recitation of the official "*Bulletin décadaire*" containing laws and judiciously selected news of the day, followed by tales of civic virtue and moral instructions often of inconceivable banality, and ending with the celebration of marriages, which could be legally performed only on that day. In Paris fifteen churches were appropriated to these services, all of which were renamed; Notre Dame becoming the Temple of the Supreme Being, Saint Eustache the Temple of Agriculture, and so forth.

On the other hand everything possible was done to suppress the observance of Sunday; schools were ordered to be kept open. No official or person over whom the government could exercise an influence was allowed to absent himself from work or to show any sign of holiday-making. In communes, where the administration was in the hands of the Directors' nominees, the churches were locked up as Sunday came round. The same regulations were applied to all fasts and festivals; even the markets were ordered to be so arranged that fish should not be sold on Fridays or fast days. For the old festivals were substituted a series of *fêtes*: some moral, such as the *fête* of Youth in March, of Marriage in April, of Old Age in July; others political, as the Execution of the last tyrant (January 21), Capture of the Bastille (July 14), Foundation of the Republic (September 22), Eighteenth Fructidor (September 4). But it was beyond the power of the Directors to force the whole nation to attend the *décadis* and *fêtes* or to forget the old Sunday holiday. Spectators came to see the marriages on the *décadis*; when there were none they stayed away. The peasants danced and drank on Sunday and refused to do either on the *décadi*. As for the *fêtes* so eagerly celebrated in the early days of enthusiasm, they became a weariness to the flesh in these times of apathy, contempt, and disgust.

Next to the clergy the vengeance of the Directors fell most heavily

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on the journalists. Before the *coup d'état* the Directory had sent repeated Messages demanding stricter laws against the freedom of the press, which the *Corps Législatif* had consistently refused to pass. Now the Directors had all they required; the Law of September 5 gave them the right to suppress any journal of which they disapproved, while a second law passed on September 8 confiscated forty-two of the principal newspapers and condemned their proprietors, editors, and writers to transportation. The greater number escaped; but one of the most distinguished, Suard, was included in the first ship-load transported to Cayenne; and many others followed him or were imprisoned at Oléron or the Île de Ré. Among those condemned in the years 1798 and 1799 were La Harpe, Fontanes, Michaud, and Lacretelle, in fact the majority of the small body of men of letters who had survived the Revolution.

During the months between the *coup d'état* and the elections in the spring of 1798 the *Corps Législatif* sank into complete dependence on the Directors and obeyed their orders almost implicitly. Nearly all those who had given dignity and prestige to its proceedings were swept away. The Law of September 5 had eliminated two hundred deputies, and others who had escaped proscription, as Thibaudeau, Dupont of Nemours, Doulcet, resigned or absented themselves. The promoters of the *coup d'état*, now known as the "*Fructidoriens*," led the Councils; among these were Marie-Joseph Chenier, Tallien, Jean Debry, General Jourdan, Chazal, Bailleul, and Boulay. Sièyès could hardly be said to belong to any party, though he had been one of the most important promoters of the *coup d'état*, and had sat on the Commission which drew up the Law of September 5. Beyond self-interest Sieyès was moved by few passions; but he was not free from a genuine hatred of all who had belonged to the former *noblesse*. He was responsible for the only attempt at independent action on the part of the Councils. This was a proposition to "ostracise," that is to banish from France, every ex-noble or person who had held high office under the Monarchy. Characteristically he made Boulay his mouthpiece in bringing forward this scheme, which would have affected the lives and properties of many thousands of innocent persons. It met with such universal execration that it was promptly withdrawn, to be replaced by a foolish law declaring all ex-nobles to be foreigners who could obtain the rights of French citizens only by going through the process of naturalisation.

One measure of supreme importance was dictated to the *Corps Législatif* by the Directors and was passed by them on September 30, 1797, the law of the Budget for the Year VI, which practically wrote off two-thirds of the interest on the Public Debt. This act of bankruptcy is dealt with in a later chapter; it is only possible here to repeat that the history of these years cannot be thoroughly understood without constantly bearing in mind the influence of the financial position on the political action of the government.

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Under the Constitution the Primary Assemblies were due to meet in March, 1798, and the Electoral Colleges during the first days of April. The electors in this year were called upon to replace or re-elect the last Third of the members of the Convention, as well as to fill the seats of those expelled in September, 1797. In all, 437 deputies, nearly two-thirds of the entire *Corps Législatif*, were to be returned. The moderate party was crushed; but a fresh and more formidable opposition was coming to the front.

In the summer of 1797 the Directors had promoted the formation of "Constitutional Clubs" throughout the country. These clubs had grown rapidly, corresponded with each other, and accepted the direction of the central "*Cercle Constitutionnel*" in Paris; they now formed a compact and powerful ultra-revolutionary organisation, which had become intensely hostile to the Directory and was supported by the great mass of the electorate. "In old days we had one tyrant, now we have five," was a sentiment which was shared not by Jacobins only but by all who had suffered from the bankruptcy or from the petty tyrants who represented the Directory. Long before the elections began it was obvious to the Directors and to the "Fructidorians" that they would be hopelessly beaten; and they prepared to defend themselves after their own fashion.

Denunciations of anarchists and threats of a new Fructidor poured from the official presses; but the chief reliance of the Directors rested on the promotion of an organised system of "*scissions*." Wherever the Directorial party found itself in a minority in the Electoral Colleges, its members were encouraged to declare that the election was not free; to retire, form themselves into a separate college, and return their own candidate. By the electoral law as it stood the double return would be brought before the Chambers after the new members had taken their seats on May 20. But, to meet the exigencies of the present elections, the Fructidorians carried through the *Corps Législatif* a new law giving the power of verifying the returns to the existing Chambers before the new members could sit. Accordingly the majority set to work to declare every new member in favour of the Directory duly returned, whether he had been chosen by the majority or by the minority in "*scission*." But so few were the voters who had given their suffrage in favour of the Directory that even this ingenious device failed. Something more drastic was required, and it was not wanting.

A message was received from the Directory declaring that anarchists and Royalists were identical, and that both took their orders from the so-called King and must be again suppressed. A commission was appointed to consider this message, of which Bailleul was the spokesman; and on his report a law was hurried through both Chambers on May 11, 1798, which, after setting forth that the elections were the result of a Royalist conspiracy to return anarchists wherever they were not strong enough to return a Royalist, proceeded to declare the elections

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in seven Departments entirely null and void, to select the candidates least objectionable to the Directory in twenty-three other Departments, and finally to exclude by name forty-eight "anarchist" deputies (among whom, of all possible people, was Cambacérès), from the remaining Departments. This second *coup d'état*, known as that of 22 Floréal, An VI, passed off for the moment quite peaceably. Two days later François de Neufchâteau, probably by a preconcerted arrangement, drew the retiring ballot and was succeeded as Director by Treilhard, *avocat* and ex-member of the Convention, who had played a leading part in the *coup d'état* of September, 1797. François was shortly afterwards consoled by the Ministry of the Interior.

This was the last victory of the Directors. The elimination of deputies had not been sufficiently sweeping; and the men who had carried out the Directors' latest *coup d'état* either were, or found it necessary to appear, ashamed of the cynicism of their proceedings. The whole country was in revolt, and the Fructidorians themselves changed sides during the course of the next twelve months, even Boulay and Bailleul changing their masters and accepting leading briefs from the other side.

Since September, 1797, the Directors had been absolute; their rule had led to nothing but ruin at home and the threat of disaster abroad. Nor was it merely failure with which the Directors were charged: they were accused also of promoting and fostering a new class of speculators, commissaries, and contractors, whose fortunes were built upon the public distress. The men, dishonest, reckless, and vulgar, flaunted their wealth in lavish or debauched display; the women lived in a sort of delirium of shamelessness, exhibiting themselves in costumes more indecent than nudity, changing their husbands at their own caprice, and trading on their charms or the influence of their lovers. Two at least of the Directors, Rewbell and Barras, were known to be the patrons of these people, and were believed to be their partners.

From June, 1798, to May, 1799, the Directors kept up a losing fight with the *Corps Législatif* over the question of finance and supply. Their position was that there existed a large and not clearly ascertained deficit, that the expenses of the next year would amount to at least £28,000,000, and that new means of increasing the revenue must be found. The *Corps Législatif* denied that the revenue was insufficient, and declared that the financial difficulties were due to the waste and corruption of the executive. One Commission appointed to examine the demands of the Directory reported that "no part of the administration was free from corruption and immorality"; another "that the deficit was caused solely by the most monstrous and revolting corruption and waste." Before the elections of 1799 the Directors themselves were not directly charged by name, but their Ministers and Commissaries were attacked with increasing enèrgy. Those who were the objects of the most bitter denunciations

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were Schérer, Minister of War, Trouvé, Commissary at Milan, a *protégé* of Larevellière-Lépeaux, and Rapinat, Commissary in Switzerland, brother-in-law of Rewbell, whose harsh, overbearing rapacity had made his name a byword throughout Europe. The Directors so far bent before the storm as to recall Trouvé and Rapinat and to remove Schérer by giving him the command of the Army of Italy, where the hatred in which he was held by officers and men contributed not a little to the series of disasters which befell the French throughout Italy in the spring and summer of 1799.

In the midst of these financial furies the *Corps Législatif* passed the only law enacted under the Directory which has produced a permanent influence on history, the Law of Conscription. The armies of the Convention had been raised partly by voluntary enlistment, partly by the great *levée en masse* of 300,000 men made by the Committee of Public Safety. Five years of constant warfare had greatly reduced the strength of the French forces in the field. Bonaparte had carried the picked veterans to Egypt; and of those who remained 100,000 men were scattered from Amsterdam to Bern and Naples, barely sufficing to prevent the peoples of the vassal Republics which the Directors had founded in Holland, in Switzerland, and in Italy, from rising against their benefactors.

By the summer of 1798 it was clear that a renewal of the war with Austria was inevitable, and that the armies must be largely reinforced. To effect this a law proposed by General Jourdan was finally passed establishing the system of conscription, by declaring that all unmarried French citizens between the ages of twenty and twenty-five were liable to military service. The number of conscripts required each year was made the subject of an annual law. The young men in each Department were to be registered in five classes, the first consisting of those between twenty and twenty-one, and so on in an ascending scale of age to the last class, those between twenty-four and twenty-five. The conscripts each year were to be drawn from the first class, each subsequent class to be called out only in case the first did not furnish a sufficient number. Other clauses enacted that officers of the cavalry and infantry were to be appointed from those who had served for three years in the ranks, exception being made in favour of any who had shown special gallantry in action. This law, which placed so magnificent a weapon in the hands of Bonaparte, and which has for a century formed the basis of the military system of Europe, was under the Directory worse than a failure.

On September 24 the first annual law fixed the number of conscripts required at 200,000. The Directors reduced this to 184,000 by excluding the Departments which had been ravaged by the Vendée and *Chouan* wars, nominally "to promote the growth of the population and re-establish agriculture," in reality to stave off the outbreak of a fresh civil war. After eight months of strenuous effort not more than 37,000

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conscripts had been drafted into the various armies. For the moment it seemed that military ardour was dead throughout France. Evasions, false certificates of marriage, self-mutilation, and wholesale desertion formed not the exception but the rule. Of 1200 conscripts mustered at Aix all but 250 deserted in the course of a few weeks; of 2000 conscripts marching from Luxembourg to Tours 1200 deserted; in the Haute Loire 1087 of the 1400 conscripts deserted; and so from north to south throughout the country.

In many Departments deserters were declared *émigrés*, and their relatives imprisoned or heavily fined; but such measures only aggravated the evil, for the outlawed deserters joined the brigands or formed themselves into bands and resisted arrest by force. In Belgium the conscription was met by open rebellion. The Belgians had been maddened by the robberies and insolence of the Commissaries, by the persecution of the clergy, and by the closing of the churches. The peasantry now rose against this last demand, and for three months, without leaders and without arms, held their ground against regular French troops, burning trees of liberty, reopening churches, and killing or driving away the French officials. They were at last subdued; the whole body of the clergy, 8000 in number, as has already been said, were sentenced to imprisonment, and the peasants were mercilessly punished; but Belgium furnished few conscripts to the French army.

The electoral Colleges met on April 23, 1799. The war with Austria and Russia had already opened disastrously. The electors knew that Jourdan had been defeated on the Rhine, that the armies of Italy had been everywhere beaten and were in full retreat, and that the only general in whom they had absolute faith was in Egypt. Alternately dreaded and despised at home, the Directors had hitherto been the dictators of war and peace abroad; they had now lost their last security, the prestige of success. When the news of the assassination of the French envoys at Rastatt on April 28 arrived in Paris, it was loudly asserted that they had been murdered by order of the Directory. The assertion was of course ridiculous, but interesting as showing how completely the Directors were lost in public estimation.

The elections resulted in the return of a large number of advanced Jacobins, of nearly all those who had been excluded by the *coup d'état* of May 11, 1798, and of a considerable contingent of those who had been known as Fructidorians, but were now the determined enemies of the existing Directors, if not of the Directory itself as a form of executive government. To complete the misfortunes of the Directors, Rewbell, the only man among them capable of facing the storm, retired by ballot on May 9.

Sieyès was at once elected in his place, and this time he did not refuse. He had been absent from France since May 10, 1798, on a mission of the highest importance, the object of which was to induce the

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new King of Prussia, Frederick William III, to exchange his neutrality for an active alliance with France; and the belief, though absolutely unwarranted, that he had succeeded, raised still higher the curious prestige which attached itself to his name. His election may be taken as an acknowledgment by all parties in the State of the failure of the Constitution, and of their belief that he was the one Frenchman able to produce a new one.

Sieyès himself had been meditating a design to place a foreign prince on a constitutional throne; he thought at one time of a marriage between the Archduke Charles and Madame Royale, afterwards of approaching the Duke of Brunswick. But these thoughts had led to no form of action, and were probably now replaced by a resolution to renew the project of the Constitution which had been so contemptuously set aside by the "Commission of Eleven" in 1795, reserving to himself in the post of Grand Elector as great an amount of dignity and emolument and as small an amount of responsibility as he could secure. What may have been his exact design is matter of conjecture; the one thing certain is that to elect him to the Directory was to admit the enemy within the fortress. His election marks the end of the Constitution of the Year III. The events that followed, the expulsion of the then Directors, the hopeless failure of the *Corps Législatif* to take their place, the intrigues of Sieyès and Barras, all these belong to the history of the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, and will be found in a later chapter, relating that momentous change in the history of the Revolution.

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CHAPTER XVII

THE EXTINCTION OF POLAND, 1788–97

It is difficult for anyone whose knowledge of history goes no further back than the eighteenth century to realise that Poland was once a considerable Power in Europe; that under its Jagello Kings it headed a successful struggle of the Slavs to resist German expansion and German domination; that under the Vasa dynasty it was the stronghold of the Catholic reaction in northern Europe; that in the reign of John Sobieski it turned the scale in the last great struggle with the Turks and rolled back the victorious forces of the Crescent from the walls of Vienna. After Sobieski's death the history of Poland is a record of rapid and apparently irretrievable decadence. Its decline is usually attributed to the vices of its Constitution: to the elective monarchy and the *pacta conventa* which extorted from each successive King an acknowledgment of his impotence in the State; to the exclusive representation of the nobles in the Diet, and the absence of any middle class to bridge the gulf between the privileged oligarchy and the down-trodden serfs; to the *liberum veto*, which made unanimity necessary for any valid decision of the Diet, and gave to a faction, however inconsiderable in itself, the power of thwarting the national will; and finally to the anarchical right of Confederation, which made it lawful for a band of nobles to pursue a common aim even by force of arms. Nowhere, except perhaps in fifteenth century Scotland, were conditions so favourable to disorder; and nowhere was there less efficient machinery for its repression.

But it is a mistake to suppose that this very faulty constitution was the only or even the most prominent cause of the decline of Poland. The maintenance of its former power and importance was rendered impossible by the rise of the two neighbouring States of Russia and Prussia. Russia aspired to be the greatest of Slavonic States, and strove to identify the interests of the Slavs with those of the Greek Church. Hitherto Poland had been without question the most influential and the most civilised of the Slavonic kingdoms, but she had received Christianity from the Church of Rome. As Poland was also an obstacle to the connexion with Germany from which Russia derived a chief part of her western

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teaching, it was inevitable that Russian expansion must be harmful and probably fatal to Poland. Equally deeply-rooted was the antagonism of Prussia. The Prussian Kings took their title from that part of Prussia which they inherited from the Teutonic Knights. The Knights, who constituted as it were a corporate ancestor of the Hohenzollerns, had formerly waged a successful crusade against the Slavs on the southern side of the Baltic, but had ultimately been worsted and deprived both of their independence and of the bulk of their territory by the Jagello Kings, who united Lithuania with Poland. East Prussia remained a Polish fief till after the middle of the seventeenth century; and even then the Province was until 1772 completely severed from Brandenburg, the kernel of the Hohenzollern dominions, by the Polish Province of West Prussia. Moreover the Electors of Brandenburg and Kings of Prussia were Protestants; and after the conversion of the Saxon dynasty they became the recognised champions of Protestant interests in northern Germany. In this capacity they were necessarily hostile to Poland, which had long upheld the cause of militant Roman Catholicism. On every ground, therefore, geographical, political, and religious, the interests of Poland were opposed to those of her eastern and her western neighbour.

Of the two hostile States Russia was by far the more active enemy of Poland. In 1733, on the death of Augustus II of Saxony, the Poles chose a native King, who was also the father-in-law of the King of France. Russia vetoed the election, and compelled the Poles to accept a second Saxon ruler, in the person of Augustus III. Prussia on this occasion remained sulkily neutral, because she had every reason to dislike the union of Saxony and Poland, and was not yet familiar with the idea of co-operation with Russia. But thirty years later, when the Polish throne was again vacant, Russia and Prussia acted in complete harmony. By their treaty in 1764 they agreed to procure the election of a native noble, to prevent the abolition of the *liberum veto* or the establishment of hereditary monarchy, and to introduce a new element of discord into the Republic by releasing the dissidents, both Protestants and members of the Greek Church, from the law which excluded them from political employments. The first of these objects, owing to the weakness or apathy of the Powers which should have supported Poland, was achieved without difficulty. The Poles elected Stanislas Poniatowski, whose personal charms had gained for him a prominent place among the numerous lovers of Catharine II. His chief qualification from the Russian point of view was that he was likely to be a docile vassal to the mistress who had been so lavish as to reward him with a crown. But Stanislas' weak and impulsive nature was open to influence from within as well as from without. In the intervals between his fits of terror at the possible displeasure of the Czarina, he was a zealous Roman Catholic and a patriotic Pole. He desired, as did the bulk of his subjects, to maintain

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the ascendancy of the established Church, and to strengthen Poland by reforming its lamentable constitution. But Russian arguments "armed with cannon and bayonets" were more than Polish King or Diet could resist. Under the open dictation of the Russian ambassador, backed up by a Russian army, the Diet voted in 1767 the repeal of the laws against the dissidents, and in 1768 accepted a treaty by which Russia guaranteed the integrity of the Polish territory and the maintenance of the Polish constitution.

Ecclesiastical zeal combined with patriotic fervour to impel all lovers of their country and its Church to resist the foreign Power which attacked both the religion and the independence of Poland. In 1768 the Confederation of Bar was formed by the malcontent nobles, with the object of restoring the supremacy of Roman Catholicism and repudiating the treaty with Russia. The latter Power at once employed all its force to crush what it chose to regard as a rebellion. But Austria and France encouraged the Confederates, while Turkey seized the first pretext to declare war against Russia. Thus Russian intervention in Poland seemed likely to lead to a European war on a large scale. Frederick the Great, who must have been drawn into such a war as the ally of Russia, was eager to continue the work of peaceful administration, which was necessary to enable his country to recover from its exhausting efforts during the last great struggle. He saw that Austria held the key of the situation, and that Austria could only be appealed to through her cupidity. But at whose expense could a bribe be furnished? Turkey had provinces which were coveted at Vienna; but Turkey was still too strong to be partitioned, and Prussia had no interest in weakening the Porte. There remained Poland, too feeble and distracted to resist, and the possessor of districts which were of incalculable value to the Prussian King. The project of partition, adroitly suggested from Berlin, was found to provide the easiest and the most attractive solution of all difficulties. Maria Theresa took the bribe with tears of shame and remorse, but the more she wept the more territory she demanded. In 1772 the three robber-Powers made a treaty by which they agreed that in order to restore public tranquillity they would enforce claims upon Poland which were "as ancient as they were legitimate." It took three years of intimidation to overcome Polish resistance; but in 1775 the Diet at last consented to the cession of territory, to the creation of a permanent Council which was to be a mere agent of Russia, and to a renewed guarantee of its constitution by the Powers who had used that constitution as a pretext for intervention and for self-aggrandisement. Russia took the Provinces adjacent to its frontier; Austria took Galicia; and Prussia obtained the coveted Province of West Prussia, but without the municipal republics of Danzig and Thorn, which remained in nominal subjection to Poland.

The First Partition left Poland not only weakened by the loss of nearly

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one-third of her territory, but also to all intents and purposes a dependency of Russia. Russian troops were quartered in the country; and the Russian ambassador was as omnipotent at Warsaw as is the British Resident at the court of a petty Indian prince. The spirit of a proud nation chafed indignantly at the undisguised exercise of foreign dictation; and the violent antipathy to Russia generated during these years strengthened the conviction that a thorough reform of the constitution was necessary if Poland was ever to recover its independence. Gradually the prospects of the reforming party were improved by external events. In 1780 the alliance between Russia and Prussia, which had been so disastrous to Poland, came to an end. The Austro-Russian alliance, which took its place, was more threatening to Turkey than to Poland. With Austria the relations of Poland had been traditionally friendly. The two States had been united from time to time by common hostility to Protestantism and to the Turks. It is true that their good understanding had been occasionally interrupted by the influence of France in Poland; but since 1756 the long antagonism between France and Austria had come to an end. Austria had joined in the partition of 1772; but it was notorious that she had been to the last moment an unwilling accomplice. Austria had no reason, such as Prussia had, either to dread a revival of Poland, or to prohibit a reunion of Poland and Saxony.

So far, therefore, as Austrian influence supplanted that of Prussia at St Petersburg, Poland was justified in congratulating herself on the exchange. In 1787 the Turks declared war against Russia. In 1788 Joseph II announced his intention of taking up arms against the Turks; but on the other hand Sweden attacked Russia, and the Triple Alliance was formed between Prussia and the Maritime Powers to thwart the ambitious designs of the two imperial Courts. These events had a decisive influence upon the position of Poland, whose alliance was sought on both sides. Catharine II offered to renew her guarantee of the integrity of the Polish territories, and demanded leave to raise in Poland thirty thousand horsemen for the Russian army. Stanislas hoped to induce the Czarina to consent to the establishment of hereditary monarchy in return for Polish assistance. Meanwhile Prussia also made overtures to Poland. The Prussian envoy, Buchholz, pointed out that the Russian guarantee could only be directed against Prussia, and offered that Frederick William II would undertake a similar obligation. He urged that the Turks had done nothing to incur the hostility of Poland, and that the weakening of Turkey would strengthen the Power which already domineered over the Republic. Finally, he held out hopes that Prussia would support a substantial measure of constitutional reform. It was at this juncture that the famous "Four years' Diet" met at Warsaw on October 6, 1788.

In the *dietines*, or preliminary meetings of electors, the anti-Russian

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party had triumphed; and the majority of the *nonces* were in favour of Polish independence and of constitutional reform. The first measure of the Diet, on October 7, was to form itself into a Confederation, so as to avoid the paralysing effect of the *liberum veto*. The proposals for co-operation with Russia were not even submitted to the assembly, which demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Russian troops from Polish soil. Catharine, who needed all her forces against Turkey and Sweden, could not refuse to comply. The permanent Council, which had been established in 1775, was abolished, and thus Russian domination was for the moment overthrown. At the same time the overtures of Prussia were eagerly welcomed, and the leaders of the reforming party put themselves in close communication with the Prussian and English ambassadors. Unfortunately for Poland, there was no leader who realised the imperative importance of haste. The favourable circumstances of 1788 and 1789 were not likely to be indefinitely prolonged. If the reforms of 1791 had been adopted two years earlier, they would at any rate have had a chance of taking root, and also Prussia might have been so pledged to their maintenance that she could not break faith. But the opportunity was allowed to slip and it never returned.

It must be admitted that there were many excuses for delay. The Poles were not experts in constitutional procedure, and the possibilities of obstruction were very great. King Stanislas at the commencement was still under Russian influence, and it was only very gradually that his extreme dread of St Petersburg was overpowered by a sense of loyalty to the interests of the nation. The conclusion of a treaty with Prussia was impeded, partly by the suspicion which Prussia's past attitude towards Poland excited, and partly by Hertzberg's desire for a bargain by which Danzig and Thorn were to be given up in return for some cession on the part of Austria. The more patriotic the reformers were, the more they hesitated to approve a transaction which involved the surrender of Polish territory; while mercantile interests were opposed to any weakening of Polish control of its one great navigable river, the Vistula. And although the principle of reform was accepted by the majority in the Diet, it was by no means easy to obtain any general agreement as to details. Thus it was notorious that the practice of electing to the kingship had over and over again given occasion for domestic discord and foreign intervention. Yet the proposal to establish hereditary succession ran counter to many of the strongest prejudices of the Poles, and was inconsistent with their traditional conception of "liberty." The admission to the Diet of urban delegates was imperatively necessary to give stability and unity to the State; but many of the nobles hesitated to sacrifice their prescriptive monopoly of political power. It was a moot point whether constitutional change should precede or follow the conclusion of an alliance with Prussia and the Maritime States. Almost every question offered unlimited opportunity

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for that discursive eloquence which in Poland took the place of orderly debate.

It was not until March 29, 1790, that the defensive treaty with Prussia was formally approved, and it contained no stipulation with regard to Danzig and Thorn. This has often been held to have been a mistake on the part of the Polish patriots. If the Prussian alliance was all-important, it was foolish to be too scrupulous and niggardly about the terms. A sacrifice at the time might have served to avert far greater losses in the future. As it was, Prussia was chagrined by Polish obstinacy; and the Conference of Reichenbach, which finally disappointed Prussia's hopes of making a profit out of the Eastern imbroglio, made the Polish alliance comparatively valueless at Berlin. With the rupture of the Austro-Russian alliance the Eastern Question receded more and more into the background; and the probability steadily grew that Prussia would find it to her interest to repudiate her obligations to Poland, as she had already repudiated her obligations to Turkey. So long as Poland could be useful, it was desirable that the Republic should be strengthened in every way; and the partisans of reform were encouraged to proceed with their work in confident reliance upon Prussian support. But when the need of the alliance was at an end, Prussia almost inevitably reverted to the old policy of keeping Poland weak and divided.

Yet the Diet at Warsaw continued to discuss schemes of reform as if nothing had occurred to diminish the chance of carrying them out. Progress was as slow as ever. The extreme limit of the duration of a Diet was two years, and the term was rapidly approaching. It was obviously absurd to leave an unfinished task to wholly new hands. The difficulty, which gave rise to prolonged discussion, was at last met by ordering fresh elections to take place, but the delegates chosen were to be added to those already sitting. This doubling of the Diet, which took place on December 16, 1790, made little difference to the balance of parties, but it certainly did not tend to shorten debate. In the early months of 1791 two decisions were reached. Certain regulations were made with regard to the procedure of future Diets. As opinion was not yet prepared to accept the vote of a simple majority, it was agreed that declarations of war, treaties of peace, and political laws should require a majority of three-quarters of the assembly, whereas taxes could be voted by two-thirds; and it was laid down as a permanent rule that no Diet might authorise a cession of territory, which had the effect of still further cooling the zeal of Prussia in the Polish cause. At this rate the new Constitution would take years to enact. The opposition, composed partly of bigoted Republicans and partly of more or less interested partisans of Russia, justified its resolute obstruction by appealing to a law of 1768, which made unanimity necessary for any change in fundamental laws.

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To overcome obstruction it was necessary for the reformers to resort to something like a *coup d'état*. It was agreed to bring forward a draft Constitution ready made, and to carry it *en bloc* by acclamation so as to avoid the endless discussion of successive clauses. Stanislas, who had now thrown himself on the patriotic side, undertook the task of making the formal proposition. The date originally chosen was anticipated by two days through fear of premature disclosures; and on May 3, 1791, Stanislas Poniatowski enjoyed the finest triumph of his life. Proceedings commenced with a report of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, in which stress was laid upon dangers which threatened the Republic, the possibility of a new partition, the avowed hostility of Russia, the risk of treachery on the part of Prussia, and the corruption of native Poles by foreign gold. A marshal of the Diet solemnly called upon the King to propose some means of saving the State. In response to this appeal Stanislas declared his conviction that safety could only be attained by the establishment of a new Constitution, and announced that he held the plan of such a Constitution in his hands. The reading of the draft was followed by impassioned speeches; and from the loud expressions of applause or dissent the opinion of the vast majority could be clearly gathered. Amid intense excitement the King rose to take a solemn oath to observe the new Constitution, and called upon the Deputies to follow him to the cathedral so as to give added solemnity to their momentous decision. Some twelve members remained gloomily obstinate in their seats; the rest streamed in an impressive procession through the midst of an applauding mob from the palace to the church, where before the high altar they recited the formula of the royal oath.

The main object of the Constitution was to give such power to the monarchy that it should be able in the future to maintain national unity and to suppress disorder. Henceforth the throne was to be filled, not by election, but by hereditary succession. On the death of the reigning King the crown was to pass to the Elector of Saxony and his heirs, either male or female. The King was to have supreme control of the army, and the nomination of members of the Senate and of officers of State. Executive power was to be in the hands of the King and of six responsible ministers. The right of legislation was vested in the Diet, which was to consist of two Chambers, to meet every two years, and to include deputies from the free towns. All laws were to be approved by the King, but his veto could only postpone the execution of a law from one Diet to another. The *liberum veto* and the right of Confederation were suppressed "as contrary to the spirit of the present Constitution and tending to trouble the State." Roman Catholicism was to remain the dominant religion of the State and proselytism was forbidden; but toleration was assured to the adherents of other creeds.

Poland was for the moment tranquil and triumphant. Many of the most strenuous opponents of reform declared their intention of accepting

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the new system of government when they were convinced that it had received the approval of the nation. But the maintenance of the Constitution of May 3 depended less on the wishes of the Poles themselves than on the action of the neighbouring States; and to understand what followed it is necessary to form a clear conception of their attitude. In attempting to do this it is imperative to remember that the Polish Question was not and could not be isolated from the other great questions which agitated Europe at the time, the growing demand for intervention in France, and the unfinished negotiations for a final settlement of the Eastern Question. As regards Poland it is perfectly easy to define the policy adopted at St Petersburg. The promulgation of the new Constitution was a deliberate act of defiance to Russia. Catharine II had from the first warned the Poles that she would not tolerate any infringement of the Constitution which she had guaranteed in 1768 and again in 1775. Hitherto she had been so busied with military operations in the south and north that she had been compelled to neglect the affairs of Poland. But in the spring of 1791 her hands were comparatively free. She had concluded a treaty with Gustavus III, and she had announced her willingness to concede peace to the Turks on condition that that Oczakoff should be ceded to Russia. That condition was resented by England and by Prussia; but their hostility was already discounted by Pitt's inability to carry public opinion with him in his resistance to Russian aggrandisement. As soon as the Turkish war was at an end — and the preliminaries of peace were signed in August — Catharine had made up her mind to subordinate all other considerations to the imperative necessity of restoring Russian domination in Poland. There was only one obstacle in the way of active measures. Catharine required a preliminary assurance that she would not be impeded by the joint opposition of Austria and Prussia. In 1791 it was not possible to gain this assurance, and therefore Russian intervention in Poland was postponed. But it is characteristic of Catharine that she had clearly formulated in her own mind a way out of the novel difficulty created by the momentary co-operation of two States which had for half a century been implacably hostile to each other. "I cudgel my brains," she said, "to urge the Courts of Vienna and Berlin to busy themselves with the affairs of France. I wish them to do this that I may have my own elbows free. I have many unfinished enterprises and I wish these two Courts to be fully occupied so that they may not disturb me." It was for this that Catharine was waiting. So soon as Austria and Prussia were engaged in France, Russia was prepared to deal with Poland.

The attitude of Austria is equally clear. Leopold II had deliberately abandoned the Pro-Russian policy of his predecessor, and had reverted to the sounder traditions of Maria Theresa. Nothing could be more in harmony with the essential interests of Austria than the existence of a

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strong Polish State, united by dynastic ties with Saxony, and equally ready to oppose the ambitions of Russia on the one side or of Prussia on the other. Such a State would immensely strengthen Roman Catholicism and revive Austrian influence in northern Germany. It would probably put an end to the *Fürstenbund*. To Leopold, therefore, it was an obvious and imperative duty to support the new Polish Constitution. So distinct was Austrian interest in the matter that it has been held, though without adequate documentary evidence, that Austria must have inspired the *coup d'état* of May 3.

For Prussia the problem was far less simple than for the other two Powers. Some glimpses have already been given of the conflict of interests in Berlin. In itself the reorganisation of Poland, and still more the reunion of Poland with Saxony, ran counter to all the legitimate ambitions of Prussia. The cession of Danzig and Thorn might have rendered the dose more palateable, but without the sweetmeat it was undisguisedly nauseous. Hertzberg urged the straightforward course of promptly denouncing the Constitution and demanding its withdrawal. But Hertzberg's influence had been declining since Reichenbach; and in 1791 he was practically superseded by Bischoffswerder, a Saxon by birth, who had obtained almost complete ascendancy over the feeble-minded Frederick William II. Bischoffswerder was eager to bring about an alliance between Austria and Prussia, to which the chief hindrance was the Emperor's delay in the negotiations at Sistova. Prussia was gradually drifting from the firm lines of policy which Frederick the Great had pursued and Hertzberg had more or less endeavoured to follow. During the transition from one system to another vacillation was almost inevitable; and this vacillation is most clearly to be seen in the relations of Prussia with Poland. Moreover in May, 1791, there was still a possibility of a war with Russia on the Turkish Question; and until that was completely removed it was obviously impolitic on the part of Prussia to quarrel with a possible ally in Poland. All these considerations help to explain if not to justify those acts of Frederick William which afterwards brought upon him the imputation of the grossest perfidy.

On May 16 the Prussian envoy at Warsaw in a formal communication to the Diet expressed his master's pleasure at "the firm and decisive conduct of the Estates, which he regards as best fitted to give a solid foundation to the government and the prosperity of Poland." At the same time the Prussian King sent his congratulations to the Elector of Saxony, and urged him to accept the proffered succession to the Polish throne. The only reservation which he made was, that in case of the accession of an heiress, her husband must not be chosen from any of the three dynasties of Russia, Prussia, or Austria. Bischoffswerder was sent from Berlin on a special embassy to the Emperor, who was in Italy. The negotiations were delayed by Leopold's parade of a desire to

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conciliate Russia, which was a mere ruse to raise the value of his ultimate agreement, and also by the necessity of delaying any final conclusion until his return to Vienna. But on July 25 Bischoffswerder signed the preliminaries of a treaty between Austria and Prussia, by which it was agreed to guarantee the integrity and the free Constitution of Poland, to invite the Elector of Saxony to accept the Polish offers, and to make a formal stipulation prohibiting the accession to the throne of Poland of any Prince belonging to the three neighbouring States.

The alliance of Austria and Prussia was almost as startling a diplomatic revolution as the Treaty of Versailles between France and Austria in 1756. In September the Emperor and the Prussian King held their famous interview at Pillnitz, a seat of the Elector of Saxony. Although the discussions were mainly concerned with the affairs of France, the very place of meeting was significant of a common understanding with regard to Poland, and the agreement of July was renewed. At the same time, intervention in France was made conditional on the concerted action of the great Powers, and England had formally declared in favour of a policy of abstention. Leopold II was too wary to fall into the very obvious trap set by the royalist intrigues and lofty professions of Catharine II. He knew that a war with France would leave Poland at the mercy of Russia, and for this and other reasons he desired peace in the west. It was an immense relief to him when the acceptance of the French Constitution by Louis XVI seemed for a time to remove foreign intervention from practical politics.

At the end of 1791 the position of affairs was this. Russia was anxious to overthrow the recent Constitution and with it the independence of Poland. But Catharine's hand was stayed for the time by the agreement of Austria and Prussia to uphold the Polish Constitution, and by her failure so far to induce any European Prince except Gustavus III to undertake a crusade in the cause of monarchy in France. So long as this state of things continued, Poland was comparatively safe, though the Poles made little use of their brief interval of security to prepare for the inevitable struggle in the future. But in the early months of 1792 a series of events made the prospect far less propitious for Poland than it had hitherto been. On January 9 Russia finally closed the Turkish war by the Treaty of Jassy, and the Russian armies were free to act elsewhere. On January 18 the Franconian principalities of Ansbach and Baireuth reverted to Frederick William II, as head of the House of Hohenzollern, on the abdication of his relative, the ruling Prince. This tended to revive a feeling of jealousy between Vienna and Berlin, as Austria had every reason to dislike an extension of Prussian power into southern Germany. At the same time the Prussian King showed a growing unwillingness to uphold what was distinctly an Austrian policy with regard to Poland. When the preliminary treaty of July 25 was transformed on February 7 into the

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definite Treaty of Berlin, the engagement to maintain "*the* free Constitution of Poland" was practically annulled by the alteration into "*a* free Constitution." The substitution of the indefinite for the definite article pledged Prussia to as much or as little as she chose. Leopold was profoundly chagrined; but it was impossible to break off the negotiation on the point because the bellicose attitude of the majority in the Legislative Assembly was rendering it more and more difficult to avoid a war with France. On March 1 Leopold II suddenly died, and with him perished all hopes of a peaceful maintenance of the *status quo*. His successor, Francis II, was young and inexperienced, and before long he fell under the influence of politicians who believed that Austria would profit by war. The eminently cautious and farsighted policy of Leopold was abandoned; and Austria reverted to that reckless acquisitiveness which had characterised the rule of Joseph II. From this time events marched with rapidity. A Girondin ministry came into power in France; and on April 20 the French Assembly declared war against Austria. Prussia, which had for some time been more eager for a rupture than its ally, prepared at once to carry out the obligations which it had undertaken by the recent treaty.

This was the conjuncture for which Catharine had been waiting; and Poland soon learned how insecure were the foundations on which the new Constitution rested. In April the long-delayed answer of the Elector of Saxony was received at Warsaw. In it he declared that he could only accept the Polish offer on condition that it was approved by the neighbouring Powers, and that certain changes were made in the Constitution, notably the securing of the Crown to future Electors of Saxony by the exclusion of female succession. This was equivalent to a refusal, as Russia had already denounced the Constitution, and Prussia was bound to oppose the permanent union of Poland with Saxony. The chiefs of the Polish malcontents, who had spent the winter in Russia waiting for the instructions of their mistress, now returned to Poland, and on May 14 formed the Confederation of Targowice. In their manifesto they denounced the recent establishment of despotism in Poland, demanded the restoration of liberty and the old constitution, and appealed to Russia for assistance. Four days later the Russian Minister presented to the Diet Catharine's formal declaration of her intention to support the Confederation. On May 19, little more than a fortnight after the anniversary of the new Constitution had been formally celebrated at Warsaw, one Russian army entered Poland and another crossed the frontier into Lithuania.

The Poles were as panic-stricken as if they had had no reason to anticipate such action on the part of Russia. The Diet voted almost absolute powers to the King. The army was placed under his command; and he was authorised, if he thought it necessary, to raise a *levée en masse*. The whole revenue, together with large loans, were entrusted

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to his disposal. He could select officers, grant promotion, and raise men to noble rank at his complete discretion. In return for this confidence Stanislas swore to defend with his life the nation and the Constitution. At the same time an appeal was made to Prussia to fulfil the stipulations of the Treaty of 1790. The appeal had been foreseen at Berlin, and the Prussian Court was furnished with a cynical and unblushing answer. The gist of it was that the Poland which Prussia had promised to defend was the Poland of 1790: this had been completely transformed by the acceptance of a Constitution which had been drawn up without the knowledge and concurrence of Prussia; therefore Prussia was under no obligation to defend Poland in 1792. The issue of a contest, in which the Poles were left without assistance to oppose the overwhelming military strength of Russia, was never for a moment in doubt. They displayed both courage and capacity in several encounters, notably in an engagement at Dubienka, where Kosciusko enhanced the military reputation which he had gained under Washington in the American War. But superior numbers always turned the scale and compelled the Polish forces to retreat. In the course of six weeks the whole country was practically in Russian occupation, and effective resistance was at an end.

Stanislas, in spite of his oath, had never joined the army, nor even left Warsaw. He was neither a fool nor a hero, and he would not commit himself to what he knew to be a hopeless struggle. On July 22 he signed his adhesion to the Confederation of Targowice, and justified his action on the ground that it was the only way to avoid a partition. His position at the time, denounced by one party and distrusted by both, was not enviable. He was nominally King, but his power was annulled both by the restoration of the old constitution and by the supremacy which the events of the war placed in the hands of the leaders of the Confederation. They in their turn were mere puppets of Russia, as they learned to their cost when they tried to govern independently and to gain private profit from their success. Poland, which a few months before had almost aspired to the rank of a great Power, was again to all intents and purposes a Province of Russia.

Catharine owed her easy triumph mainly to the interested complicity of Prussia and the preoccupation of Austria in the western war. But in spite of these advantages she could not venture to retain exclusive possession of her prey, though she would have liked to do so. Even before the outbreak of the French war she had thought it wise to disarm any possible hostility on the part of Prussia by suggesting another partition of Poland. Once started, the proposal was not likely to be readily abandoned, and in fact it took a prominent place in the negotiations between Austria and Prussia with reference to their co-operation in France. Disinterested intervention in the cause of a brother King, or even of monarchy in the abstract, was quite beyond

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the normal bounds of international ethics in the eighteenth century. Both States intended to be paid for their services; and it was obviously desirable to avert a possible dispute by securing some preliminary agreement as to their respective rewards. At the same time it was felt to be rather awkward to mulct a Prince whose cause they professed to espouse; and such a scheme was not likely to conciliate the French royalists, whose support was counted upon in the campaign. So, although Austria at one time would have liked to recover Alsace or to restore the dispossessed dynasty in Lorraine, the idea of purloining French provinces was for the time abandoned. It became necessary, therefore, to look for payment elsewhere.

Quite early in the negotiations Prussia, encouraged by the suggestion from St Petersburg, declared her intention to take a portion of Poland; although the integrity of Poland, if not its later Constitution, had been guaranteed by the Treaty of 1790. The lesson of perfidy is soon learnt and easily repeated. Austria — and here the reversion to Joseph II's policy is most conspicuous — fell back upon the old scheme of exchanging the Netherlands for Bavaria. This was also suggested from St Petersburg — so eager was Catharine to find sops to pacify the recent upholders of Polish independence. This projected exchange had been foiled before by Prussian opposition: but, if that opposition were now withdrawn, there seemed to be no longer any insuperable difficulty in carrying it out. It is true that Kaunitz, who had previously favoured the exchange, deemed it monstrous that Prussia should be allowed to join in penalising Poland for having framed a Constitution which Austria had formally approved. But Kaunitz had as little influence over Francis II as over his father; his advice was contemned, and in August, 1792, he retired from an office which he had held for half a century. As Austria had made up her mind to abandon the Poles, it was easy for Russia to come to terms with the Emperor by a treaty signed on July 13, 1792, which approved of the restoration of the old Constitution in Poland. On August 7 a similar treaty was made with Prussia. Nothing was said in either treaty about partition. Catharine was satisfied to have obtained the sanction of the two Courts for her coercion of Poland, and left them to settle between themselves the question of compensation for their efforts in the French war. This had not been settled before the outbreak of hostilities, and continued to be a subject of incessant and sometimes acrimonious negotiation during the autumn and winter of 1792.

On neither side was any attempt made to disguise the unprincipled rapacity of both governments or their profound mutual distrust. Prussia, abandoning the very foundations of Frederick's policy, agreed to consent to the Austrian acquisition of Bavaria for the Netherlands, on condition that Prussia should take a part of Poland. This failed to satisfy the ministers at Vienna, who pointed out that the Prussian gain

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would be immediate, whereas that of Austria was contingent on the Elector of Bavaria's consent. Also a Polish Province was an actual increase of territory, while a mere exchange of one possession for another might bring to Austria no increase either of population or of revenue. On the sacred ground of the equal balance Austria calmly proposed that Prussia should add the Brandenburg principalities of Ansbach and Baireuth to Bavaria. Nothing could have been better calculated to excite fury at Berlin than the suggestion that Prussia should hand over territory to Austria, that she should make a sacrifice to benefit her detested ally, and that that sacrifice should consist of these ancient possessions of the House of Hohenzollern. The refusal of Frederick William was so vehement and decisive that Austria was forced either to withdraw the demand or to break up the alliance.

Then new difficulties arose. The allied forces withdrew not without ignominy from Champagne; the French pressed on into the Netherlands; and Dumouriez won the battle of Jemappes. The Provinces which had been so recently rescued from the hands of native rebels, fell at the first blow to a foreign invader. The exchange project faded at once into the dim distance. How could Charles Theodore be asked to hand over Bavaria in exchange for territories of which Austria could no longer dispose? All the more feverishly did Austria insist upon the principle of equality. If Prussia gained a part of Poland with the approval of Russia, then Austria, sooner than wait for her equivalent, must at the same time have an equal share of Poland. To this rather belated demand Prussia would not consent; and even if Prussia had given way Russia would probably have interposed an effective veto. But, unfortunately for Austria, the actual condition of affairs gave an enormous advantage in the negotiation to the allied but none the less rival State. Prussia could withdraw from the war without loss, and loudly threatened that she would do so if her demands were not accepted both by Austria and by Russia. On the other hand Austria could neither abandon the war, leaving the Netherlands in French occupation, nor could she afford to dispense with Prussian aid. Haugwitz, who represented Prussia in the dispute, found no difficulty in playing a diplomatic hand of such overwhelming strength; and on December 19 he extorted from the Austrian government a grudging and ungracious consent to a separate agreement between Berlin and St Petersburg with regard to Poland. But Austria did not abandon her claims upon Poland, although she ceased to press for their immediate satisfaction; and confidential communications with Russia urged that the concessions to Prussia should be cut down to the smallest possible dimensions.

To Catharine the spectacle of this rather undignified comedy had given undiluted pleasure. The more Austria and Prussia quarrelled, the better could Russia return to its old game of playing one off against the other. For a moment it seemed possible that she might utilise their

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growing jealousy to keep Poland in its present state of subjection, and withdraw the suggestion of partition which had been made under wholly different circumstances. A more impulsive or less prudent ruler would probably have yielded to the temptation. But Catharine could exercise consummate self-restraint in political affairs. It was safer, and therefore in the end better, to be content with a smaller gain than to run the risk of driving Austria and Prussia into a closer alliance with each other and also into an abandonment of the French war. To keep them at war, and to keep Russia out of the war, meant her own undisturbed dictatorship in the East. For this it was worth while to make some sacrifice in order to satisfy the greed of Prussia. Having once made up her mind, Catharine acted with characteristic promptitude. Instead of haggling over the rather exorbitant pretensions of Prussia, she simply met them by largely increasing the Russian share.

The terms of the Partition Treaty were arranged with great rapidity. The Prussian share, which included Danzig and Thorn as well as the district of Posen, was estimated to contain a population of a million and a half. The Provinces assigned to Russia were four times as extensive and included at least twice as many inhabitants. The two Powers agreed to use their good offices to procure for Austria the exchange of the Netherlands for Bavaria with "such other advantages as may suit the general welfare." This left open the possibility of punishing France for its adoption of an avowedly aggressive policy. Prussia pledged herself to continue the war until order had been restored in France and the French conquests were given up. Although these provisions were designed to propitiate Vienna, it was felt that a partition of Poland from which Austria was altogether excluded must be so distasteful to that State that it was agreed to keep the provisions secret until steps had been taken to carry the treaty into effect. So far as Russia was concerned this was already done, since Russian troops were in occupation of more than the Provinces to be annexed. Prussia lost no time in gaining a similar position. The Treaty of Partition was not actually signed until January 23, 1793. But on January 14 a Prussian army under the command of Möllendorf entered Poland; and two days later was published the extraordinary manifesto in which Frederick William announced his intention of saving Europe from contagion by crushing the germs of French revolutionary doctrines in Poland. The pretext was a monstrous piece of hypocrisy, but the Prussian advance was none the less irresistible. In fact the Poles were absolutely helpless. Their strong places were held by Russian garrisons, and their troops were scattered over the country under the eye of superior Russian forces. The only place which offered any resistance was Danzig, and a few rounds of artillery fire were enough to compel its surrender. By the end of the third week of March the preparations for enforcing the treaty were complete. The Poles within the stipulated boundaries received notification that they had suddenly

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become either Russian or Prussian subjects and that they must take an oath of allegiance to their new masters. At the same time a formal communication was made to the Court of Vienna of the precise terms of the Partition Treaty.

Neither to the Poles nor to the Austrian government can the news have come exactly as a surprise. The events of the last few weeks had given ample proof that Russia and Prussia had come to terms with each other, and their agreement necessarily implied partition. Nevertheless the final removal of all uncertainty caused to both the most acute sensations of disgust and anger. Austria, from her own point of view, had been not only overreached but treated with great contempt. While the two neighbouring and rival States were taking to themselves new lands, new subjects, new sources of revenue, and new recruiting grounds for their armies, Austria was to be content with the assurance of "good offices" for the carrying out of a bargain which might never be made, and at any rate could only be arranged in the possibly distant future. Moreover the respective slices of Poland were enormous, far beyond anything which Austria had been led to anticipate in the negotiations of the previous year. Also the details of the Partition brought Russian territory into actual touch with the frontier of Austrian dominions, so that the buffer State, to which Austria had always attached so much importance, had ceased to exist. Finally, these momentous changes, affecting the balance of power and the most vital interests of Austria, had been carried into effect; and Austria, on the strength of an agreement which had been strained far beyond its original scope, had never been allowed to have any voice whatever in their settlement. The material loss and the humiliation were great; and Francis II manifested his displeasure. Philip Cobenzl and Spielmann, the two Ministers who had conducted the fatal conferences with Haugwitz, were removed to other duties; and Baron Thugut was summoned to assume control of the department of foreign affairs. Austria let it be known in diplomatic circles that she had never pledged herself to acceptance of the Partition Treaty. The obvious ill-will between Vienna and Berlin was of evil omen for the campaign of 1793.

The Poles had no Ministers to degrade; and diplomatic protests on their part were not likely to receive much attention. To them the publication of the Partition was an absolutely crushing blow. The Poland which was left to enjoy a nominal and precarious independence under Stanislas Poniatowski, with all the luxuries of the *liberum veto* and the right of Confederation and the privilege of electing a native noble to succeed to the empty title of King, was no larger than the provinces of Poland which had been transformed by the signature of a foreign despot into Russian districts. And it is only fair to say that the leaders of the Confederation of Targowice were for the most part even more stunned by Catharine's action than the professed patriots. The latter had a

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shrewd suspicion of Russian aims; but the former had prated so much about the Czarina's disinterested affection for Poland that they had come to believe in it themselves. That Catharine should trample upon Polish independence was bad enough; that she should hand over a part of Poland to the perjured power of Prussia was infinitely worse. When the envoys of Russia and Prussia demanded the summons of a Diet to give formal sanction to the Partition, the Confederate leaders replied that they had no power to call a national assembly, and that they had taken an oath to maintain the integrity of Poland. To get over the difficulty, it was necessary to restore the permanent Council which the previous Diet had abolished. This Council, composed of nominees of the Russian ambassador, summoned the Diet to meet at Grodno in Lithuania. The elections took place under the supervision of Russian troops, and corruption and intimidation were equally employed to secure the return of docile delegates. The Provinces destined for partition were not represented; and all who had supported the Constitution of May 3 or had refused to join the Confederation of Targowice were excluded from either voting or sitting.

The unfortunate Stanislas wrote to Catharine imploring permission to resign a Crown which he could no longer wear with honour to himself or profit to his subjects. He received a firm answer that he had no right to abdicate at a moment when he could be useful to Poland in its extremity, with no obscure threat that even in retirement he would not escape from Russian displeasure. He was ordered to repair from Warsaw to Grodno, where the Diet was opened on June 17. Two days later the two envoys presented an identical note in which they demanded the appointment of a committee to arrange a treaty with Russia and Prussia. But even in the carefully packed assembly there was no lack of patriotic ardour. It was felt that delay might bring a turn of affairs in favour of Poland. Austria might be in a position to give weight to her indignant protests. England had never disguised her disapproval of the treatment of Poland, and was now an important member of the Coalition against France. It was notorious that Russia and Prussia had no great love for each other, and it might be possible to separate the interests of the two Courts. From the Polish point of view Prussia, as a traitorous ally, was infinitely more hateful than Russia; and submission to the latter Power would lose half its bitterness if the perfidious greed of the Court of Berlin could be baulked. This desire to divide the two allies from each other is conspicuous in the action of the Diet. To Sievers, the Russian plenipotentiary, they replied by dwelling on the loyalty of the Confederation of Targowice to Russian interests, and by an appeal to the magnanimity of the Empress. To Buchholz, the representative of Prussia, they addressed a demand that the Prussian troops should be withdrawn from Polish soil.

The unexpected opposition of the Diet could only be overcome by

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coercion, and Russia alone had the power to apply the remedy. Grodno had been deliberately chosen as the place of meeting, in order to remove the Diet from the neighbourhood of the Prussian troops and to give to Russia the absolute control of the assembly. Buchholz could only appeal for assistance to his fellow-ambassador, and so played a very secondary part in the negotiations. Sievers did not hesitate to employ the most open intimidation to overcome the reluctance of the Diet to approve the dismemberment of Poland. He confiscated the property of the prominent malcontents, and went so far as to seize the persons of seven deputies. The Diet protested that their proceedings were no longer free, and continued their studied policy of delay. A committee was appointed to enter into negotiations with Russia, but without authority to cede any territory or to negotiate with Prussia. The addition to this committee of seven members to be nominated by Sievers was unanimously rejected. The Russian minister on July 16 sent in a declaration which showed that his patience was exhausted. "Any longer delay and the refusal to grant full powers to the delegation will be regarded as a refusal to treat and a declaration of hostility. In that case the troops of her imperial Majesty will enter into military occupation of the lands and dwellings of those members of the Diet who oppose the general wish of the nation. If the King should adhere to the opposition, this occupation will be extended to the royal domains and to the property of all who support the King. Another result of the proceedings of the Diet will be the seizure of the State revenues, and the cessation of all payments to the troops, who will be forced to live at the expense of the unfortunate inhabitants of the country." This was sufficiently plain speaking; and though in the first fervour of indignation deputies clamoured that they were willing and eager to go to Siberia, more prudent counsels prevailed in the end, and full powers were granted to the committee by seventy-three votes to twenty. On July 23 a treaty was signed with Russia by which that country received legal possession of the provinces which it had already seized by virtue of its agreement with Prussia.

The Diet had successfully evaded the original demand of the two envoys for a joint negotiation and treaty with Poland. Buchholz, who had reluctantly stood aside while his colleague had successfully pressed the claims of Russia, now came forward to demand the appointment of delegates to negotiate a treaty with Prussia. The Diet appealed for Russian support against the monstrous pretensions of a State which had never received any wrong from Poland and had actually encouraged the Poles to take those measures which had incurred Russian displeasure. Sievers replied that the Diet had no alternative but to come to terms with Prussia, and that he was compelled by his instructions to advise them to yield without delay. But the whole tone of his note was so different from that of his recent communications that it did more harm than good to the Prussian cause. Stanislas and the Diet were encouraged

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to believe that Prussia would in the end receive very lukewarm support from St Petersburg. In this belief the Diet drew up a formal answer to Buchholz on July 31, in which they coolly enquired whether or no the Prussian King considered himself bound by the Treaty of 1790, and, as they believed him to be a man of honour, begged him to withdraw his troops, whose presence on Polish soil was so glaringly inconsistent with the tenour of the treaty.

Negotiations begun in this spirit were not likely to be expeditious. The Diet had appointed a committee to arrange a commercial treaty with Prussia, but had forbidden the members even to discuss any scheme for the alienation of territory. Buchholz naturally contended that these powers were quite inadequate; and the whole matter was referred back to the Diet, where the debates consisted of little but envenomed diatribes against the treachery of the Prussian King. Sievers was appealed to on both sides, but his intervention proved wholly unsatisfactory. Since the treaty of January 23 the Prussian forces in Poland had introduced several practical changes in the boundaries which had been fixed on paper; and Buchholz wished to have these confirmed by the Polish Diet. Russia had done the same thing on a larger scale; and her rectifications had been approved without much protest. The Prussian envoy was unprepared for opposition in what seemed of trifling importance. But Russia was willing to impress on its ally a sense of dependence and inferiority. A modified treaty, restricting the Prussian boundary, was put forward; and on September 2, 1793, the Diet, surrounded with a great parade of Russian military force, by a vote of 61 to 23 authorised the approval of this treaty, provided that it was not put into force until a treaty of commerce had been signed, and the whole had been secured by a Russian guarantee. But on the ground that the modifications and conditions introduced had never been approved by his master, Buchholz announced to the Diet that its decision was wholly nugatory, and demanded that the Prussian terms should be accepted as they stood.

These exasperating delays at Grodno were ruinous to the western campaign. The Allies lost the opportunity of a decisive triumph which had been opened by their successes in the early part of the year; and the Coalition was very nearly dissolved. Prussia attributed the obstinacy of the Poles and the lukewarmness of Russia to the secret intrigues of Austria. Austria retaliated by declaring that Prussia had encouraged the Duke of Zweibrücken to refuse his consent to the exchange of Bavaria, and had thus broken the distinct pledge it had given to support that project. Instead of proceeding with an energetic campaign on the Rhine, the two Allies spent all their time in these mutual recriminations. If Prussia had to coerce the Poles, and if, as seemed possible, Russia withheld all active assistance, it would be impossible to spare either money or men for the war against France, of which Prussia was

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already weary. Things might be even worse, and Prussia, instead of fighting France, might have to go to war with Austria. So intense was the passionate determination of the Prussian King and his Ministers not to part with the booty which had seemed to be actually in their hands, that Frederick William quitted the Prussian camp on September 29, ordered the troops to remain absolutely inactive, and hurried to look after his more pressing interests in the East.

But, before he actually started, events had taken a new turn at Grodno. Catharine had desired to make Prussia feel its dependence upon Russia and abandon the autocratic extensions of its frontier. But she had no intention of allowing the French war to come to an abrupt end, or of giving Frederick William an excuse for evading his promise to carry it on. As soon as she thought matters had gone far enough, she sent instructions to Sievers to bring the Poles to a more reasonable mind. The Diet was informed that it must approve the Prussian treaty without any of the conditions which it had previously attached to it. At the same time Buchholz was instructed to meet Russian wishes by consenting to the restricted boundary. In the evening of September 22 four deputies were arrested and transported out of the town. On the next day the Russian commander occupied a seat by the royal throne, and Russian soldiers guarded all the entrances to the hall. It was announced to the deputies that they would not be allowed to depart until they had come to a decision. In this crisis the deputies took the most dramatic and startling course that was possible for a Polish assembly; they held their tongues. The embarrassed general was prepared for every emergency but this. He could denounce a speech as giving evidence of "Jacobinism"; he could send a file of soldiers to silence or arrest a too vehement orator; but against this conspiracy of silence he was powerless. About three in the morning, when even silence had become exhausting, it was suggested as a solution of the difficulty that "silence gives consent." The proposal to approve the treaty was read by one of the marshals. The assembly sat dumb, and it was declared that the motion was carried. By virtue of this inarticulate decision the treaty with Prussia was signed on September 25. It is plain that Russia used greater brutality in enforcing consent to the Prussian than to her own demands, in order that all the world might see how much more unfounded and distasteful the former must be. A fortnight before the consummation of the Partition the Confederation of Targowice, which had made itself for ever hateful to all patriotic Poles, had been dissolved. The Diet of Grodno, which could at any rate plead that its action had been compelled by superior force, was allowed to continue its session till November 23. Among its last acts were the conclusion of a treaty of alliance between Russia and the mutilated State which still bore the name of Poland, and the formal revocation of all the measures of the preceding Diet, including the famous Constitution of May 3.

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The legality of the Partition Treaties of 1793 might be accepted by the European chanceries, but it was certain to be contested by the Poles; and their arguments were not without force. What right had any authority, either native or foreign, to exclude from a Polish Diet the representatives of more than half the country? If the cession of territories required popular consent to make it valid, surely the consent of those who were most immediately affected, who were to be transferred by the transaction to another allegiance, was pre-eminently necessary. Then the elections had notoriously been influenced by corruption and Russian dictation; and even so the delegates thus chosen had only been induced to give their approval by the grossest measures of coercion. It was farcical to give the name of national assent to the acts of such a Diet as that of Grodno, still more to acts which had been passed under such conditions as those of September 23. And there was the present as well as the past to excite Polish indignation. The so-called treaty of alliance, which had been signed on October 16, was really an acknowledgment of Polish subjection. Stanislas Poniatowski was a mere agent of the Russian Minister at Warsaw. Sievers, though he had done his work in coercing the Diet, was considered too lenient for his post, and was superseded by Igelström, the commander of the Russian troops in Poland. His rule was an insolent and undisguised military despotism.

If the Poles were to submit without protest, it would justify the accusation so frequently made against them that they were incapable and unworthy of national independence. But no one could say that they were incapable of conspiracy. Under the very eyes of the Russian general and his army of occupation the most ingenious and elaborate plots were developed. Secret societies were formed with the object of recovering the independence of Poland and restoring the Constitution of May 3. A regular correspondence was carried on between the plotters at home and the Polish exiles abroad. An eminent group of these, including Kosciusko, the hero of Dubienka, and the leaders of the "Four years' Diet," had found refuge in Saxony. They undertook to sound the chief foreign Courts as to their willingness to aid the cause of Poland. But their reports were by no means encouraging. Even the Powers which were most hostile to Russia and Prussia would give no active assistance to the Poles. Austria had refused to assent to the Partition of 1793, not out of love for Poland, but because the rivals of Austria gained advantages in which she had no share. What Thugut wanted was a further partition which would enable Austria to make up for her previous abstinence. Turkey had good reason to fear that when Russia had finished with Poland, she would revert to the scheme of aggression in the south which had been for the moment abandoned. But the Turks had not yet recovered from the exhausting effects of the last war, and were not prepared to provoke a quarrel with Russia. The State

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which had derived the greatest benefit from Polish disturbances, and was destined to derive still greater benefit from their continuance, was France. France, however, was at the same time passing through a terrible domestic crisis, and carrying on a war against enemies on every side. Her sympathy with the Poles, even combined with her obvious interest in stirring up trouble in the East, could not possibly take the form of practical help. The only State which held out any eventual prospect of assistance was Sweden, but Sweden could hardly do much against Russia and Prussia combined, and there was always a pro-Russian party among the Swedish nobles. So far as the informal embassies of the Polish exiles went, the conclusion they suggested was that Poland must wait for more favourable circumstances.

But delay was rendered impossible by events in Poland. Igelström, though he could not discover the precise plans or the persons of the conspirators, who are said to have numbered 20,000, was fully aware that plots of some kind were going on. To meet the danger he determined at the beginning of March, 1794, to disarm and disband a large part of the native army in Poland. Without these troops it would be impossible for the plotters to attempt anything ; and therefore it was necessary to strike at once or to abandon all hope. Unexpected success attended a rising which was at first inspired rather by despair than by confidence. The brigade of Madalinski refused to obey the orders to disband, demanded their arrears of pay, and marched in the direction of Cracow. The citizens of Cracow rose and expelled its Russian garrison. Kosciusko, who had hurried from Saxony at the first intelligence from Madalinski, was proclaimed commander-in-chief. On March 24 he published his manifesto, which was a virtual declaration of war against Russia and Prussia, and called upon all the patriots to rally to his standard. On April 4 he met at Raslawice a Russian detachment which had been sent in pursuit of Madalinski, and, thanks to the bravery of the Polish peasants, he gained a hard-won victory. This success, though of trifling importance in itself, gave immense encouragement to the insurgents. Igelström determined to disarm the Polish troops in Warsaw, but the attempt only provoked a rising in the capital. After two days' desperate fighting in the streets the Russian commander, with such of his troops as were neither killed nor wounded nor prisoners, evacuated Warsaw on April 18. A provisional government sent the news to Kosciusko, recognised his dictatorship, and adhered to the principles of the manifesto of March 24. Five days later Wilna, the chief town of Lithuania, followed the example of Cracow and Warsaw by expelling its foreign garrison. On every side the Russians, but lately the absolute masters of the country, were retreating towards the eastern frontier in order to concentrate their forces and to await the arrival of reinforcements. There was once more a free Poland. Stanislas Poniatowski, accustomed by this time to a

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passive *rôle*, remained at Warsaw, as ready to obey his own subjects as he had been docile to his foreign masters. The Poles rather pitied than detested him; but he no longer enjoyed either confidence or respect, and all real authority was concentrated in the hands of Kosciusko.

The news of this Polish revolution caused a profound sensation in Europe, and exercised a decisive influence on events in the west. Prussia and Austria had come in the course of 1793 to the verge of a deadly quarrel. So long as Austria refused to accede to the treaty which had been made at St Petersburg on January 23, Prussia would do nothing which might facilitate the acquisition by its rival either of Bavaria or of French Provinces. Moreover, Prussia was really exhausted by having to maintain two armies, one in the west and the other in Poland. At the beginning of 1794 it was obvious that Prussia, in spite of the scruples of Frederick William, would soon withdraw from active co-operation against France; and that Austria could not, and perhaps would not, do anything to alter or avert this decision. At this juncture the Maritime Powers, whose interests were vitally affected by the danger of a French occupation of the Netherlands, stepped in to exert their influence with Prussia. Lord Malmesbury, who enjoyed in a special degree the confidence of the Dutch government, was despatched on a special mission to the Court of Berlin; and on April 19 he concluded a treaty or convention with Haugwitz at the Hague. A Prussian commander (by which was understood the King in person) was to lead 62,000 men to support the common cause against France. For the mobilisation and maintenance of this force the Maritime Powers were to pay large subsidies, and all conquests were to be at their disposal.

This treaty was actually contemporary with the events in Warsaw which made it so much waste-paper. Probably in any case it could not have worked satisfactorily. England looked upon the Prussian troops as so many mercenaries, to be employed wherever the Cabinet in London thought fit, *i.e.* in the Netherlands. Prussia, on the other hand, expected to be handsomely paid for looking after her own interests, and deemed it degrading to a great Power to allow the movements of its troops to be dictated by another. Besides, the defence or the recovery of the Netherlands would primarily benefit Austria; and no Prussian statesman or soldier wished to do that. But these inherent objections to the treaty were as nothing, compared to the obstacles placed in the way of its execution by the Polish rising. If the news had come earlier, the agreement would certainly not have been signed. As it was, nothing remained for Prussia but to disregard its provisions. Frederick William himself thought this course dishonourable, and wished to go in person to lead his troops against the French. But his Ministers convinced him that he had no right to play Don Quixote at the expense of his country's interest, and that Prussia must give its chief attention to Poland.

Not only did the insurrection threaten the security of what had

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already been acquired, but it opened the possibility of fresh acquisitions. It was certain that the suppression of the rebellion would end in the final overthrow of Poland. The great prize would probably be partitioned, but the adjustment of shares would give rise to endless disputes. Austria would assuredly demand a share this time; and if Catharine chose to favour Austria rather than Prussia, Austria might avenge the slights it had received in the previous year. If Prussia intended to have a decisive or even an influential voice in the fate of Poland, she must take the lead in crushing the rebellion and must occupy the districts which she desired to retain. Possession was a most admirable argument in diplomacy. Frederick William was convinced by these arguments, sent what troops he could collect to Poland in May, and proceeded thither in person at the beginning of June. Möllendorf, who commanded on the Rhine, absolutely refused the request on the part of England that he should go to the Netherlands. He could hardly do otherwise when the most influential adviser of the King wrote to him to express his "regret that the Maritime Powers have given us such generous terms as to induce us to sign the convention of the Hague." Malmesbury tried all his powers of argument and polite invective, but quite in vain. The Treaty of the Hague was worse than useless. It created hopes which were never fulfilled, and much time and temper were spent in trying to hold Prussia to a bargain which she had no intention of fulfilling. Malmesbury may have got the better of Haugwitz in fixing the terms of the treaty; but Prussia got the better of England by interpreting these terms as she thought fit. When the subsidies were withheld, Hardenberg calmly denounced the treaty as if the Maritime Powers had broken their pledge (October 25, 1794). France was able to seize the Netherlands and to drive the Allies from the left bank of the Rhine, because the two great military Powers of the Coalition fixed their gaze, not on the fate of Brussels or Mainz, but on that of Cracow and Warsaw.

The news from Poland was quite as startling in Vienna and St Petersburg as in Berlin. Thugut, who was now omnipotent in the control of Austrian foreign policy, attributed the recent humiliations of Austria to what he considered the blunder of Leopold II in alienating Russia. Ever since he came to power he had striven to win the favour of Catharine. His long tenure of the embassy in Constantinople had given him a great knowledge of eastern affairs; and he held out to the Czarina the prospect of renewed co-operation between Austria and Russia against Turkey. Catharine, who thought that the Polish question was for the moment settled, was not unwilling to resume the ambitious schemes which she had been compelled to drop in 1791. The war against France, which had served her so well in dealing with Poland, would be equally useful in preventing any interference to save the Porte. During the winter of 1793–4 considerable preparations were made for a Turkish campaign.

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Among these preparations was a weakening of the Russian forces in Poland, and this had contributed to the temporary success of the insurrection. All these plans were at once and completely abandoned when intelligence came that Warsaw was free and that Igelström and his army were in retreat. All that Catharine could do was to leave an adequate force in the south to check the Turks if they in their turn were tempted to attempt an aggressive movement. Every soldier that could be spared was to be sent to Poland.

Catharine never wavered as to her primary intention. Poland was to be blotted out. As she put it, "the time has come, not only to extinguish to the last spark the fire that has been lighted in our neighbourhood, but to prevent any possible rekindling of the ashes." Equally unhesitating was the attitude of Austria. Francis II had gone to the Netherlands early in the year. Thugut, as soon as he knew of the events in Warsaw, followed his master and brought him back to Vienna. This was conclusive evidence that the most pressing interests of Austria lay in the east rather than in the west, and that, in order to gain a part of Poland and to prevent another one-sided aggrandisement of Prussia, the Court of Vienna would give up the Netherlands, and possibly make peace with France. This was as serious a blow to the Maritime Powers as the failure of Prussia to carry out the promises made at the Hague. France had good reason to congratulate itself upon the diversion caused by Kosciusko. Not even in the most brilliant campaigns of Condé and Turenne had French armies gained such important and such continuous successes as in 1794.

Meanwhile Prussia had the start of her two neighbours in Poland, and seemed likely to make the most of it. Kosciusko's position was from the first utterly hopeless. Against what must be in the end an overwhelming hostile force he had an army which was inadequate in numbers, in arms, and in discipline; while at the same time he had to control a divided people. He was too much of a democrat to please the nobles, and too much of an aristocrat to conciliate either the peasants or the citizens. The peasants with their scythe-blades formed his most trustworthy infantry, and he showed his appreciation of their merits by always wearing a peasant's dress. But their really enthusiastic support could only be gained by the abolition of serfdom, and he dared not exasperate the nobles by such a measure. In the towns, and especially in Warsaw, a democratic party had asserted itself which desired to emulate the methods of Republican France, and to promote unity by putting the partisans of Russia to death. The Slavonic nature is suspicious, and a "law of suspects" in Poland would have decimated the population. Kosciusko, whose position somewhat resembled that of Lafayette, was forced to put down disorder with severity; but every punishment which he inflicted served to excite enmity and even suspicion against himself.

In such circumstances a resolute campaign on the part of the Prussians

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must have proved decisive. The King entered Poland with the confident hope that he would crush the rebellion at once and have time to win fresh laurels against the more genuine Jacobins in the west. In his first encounter with the Poles on June 6, at Rawka, he inflicted so crushing a defeat that Kosciusko felt it necessary at all risks to retreat for the defence of Warsaw. Cracow was left so feebly garrisoned that it surrendered to the Prussians on June 15. This was a great blow to the Austrians, who had destined Cracow for themselves. But after these successes the Prussians did nothing but waste time. They allowed the Polish army to conduct its hazardous and discouraging march without serious molestation. Frederick William and his incompetent advisers spent their days in reading despatches from Vienna and St Petersburg and in discussing politics rather than strategy. It was not until July 2 that they appeared before Warsaw, which was covered by the Polish troops under Kosciusko. Instead of ordering a storm, which would almost certainly have been successful, Frederick William sat down to blockade an unfortified city and an imperfectly entrenched army. It is true he had some excuse in the inadequate support given to him by the Russian troops which were associated with him in the siege. But this in itself should have opened his eyes to the fact that he was playing into the hands of Russia. Catharine wished the Poles to be occupied until she was ready to strike, but she had no desire that Prussia should gain such a decisive success as the reduction of Warsaw. While the Prussian army remained inactive, a rising broke out in the recently annexed Provinces. On the ground that their convoys were exposed to capture and their communications threatened, the besieging forces abandoned their enterprise and retired from Warsaw on September 6.

The exultation of the Poles at so unexpected a triumph was as short-lived as it was intense. The Austrians were already invading the kingdom from the south. The Russians had reoccupied Wilna on August 12, and had since made themselves masters of the whole of Lithuania. But the most serious news was that Suvóroff, the captor of Ismail and the most successful general Russia had yet produced, was marching upon Poland with the bulk of the army which had been collected for a possible campaign against the Turks. The progress of Suvóroff was as rapid and decisive as that of Frederick William had been dilatory and ineffective. In one engagement after another the Polish forces in his way were cut to pieces. Each disaster caused a panic in Warsaw, and every panic increased the difficulty of maintaining order among the unreasoning citizens who attributed failure to treachery. The Russian troops under Fersen, who had retreated with the Prussians from the siege of Warsaw, received orders to join the advancing army of Suvóroff. For a time they were hindered by the difficulty of crossing the Vistula; but at last they succeeded in forcing a passage. Kosciusko determined on a last effort to prevent the junction of the hostile forces. At Maciejowice he threw

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himself against Fersen, but after a desperate struggle his army was utterly routed (October 10). Kosciusko himself was wounded and taken prisoner. From this moment the most sanguine of Polish patriots were reduced to despair.

Suvóroff, after uniting the victorious troops of Fersen with his own, advanced with fatal rapidity upon Warsaw. His summons to surrender was refused, and the suburb of Praga on the right bank of the Vistula was hastily entrenched. If any hopes were entertained that the Russian general would be content with a blockade, they were doomed to speedy disappointment. On November 4, after a vigorous bombardment, the attacking forces threw themselves into the trenches with a reckless contempt of danger. Their fury had been roused by the stories of the treatment of Russians in the streets of the capital, and their battle-cry was, "Remember Warsaw." The Poles, many of whom were untrained citizens, gave way before such a terrific onslaught; and a frightful massacre followed the entry of the Russians into Praga. The destruction of the bridge over the Vistula, which cut off all possibility of retreat, enormously increased the bloodshed. Many of those who had escaped from fire and sword perished in the river-current. From the blood-stained suburb Suvóroff could dictate his own terms to the trembling capital, which had no alternative but surrender. On November 8 the Russians made their entry into Warsaw, and the freedom of Poland was at an end. After the terrible lesson which had been taught at Praga there was no need of exceptional severity to intimidate the Poles. Stanislas Poniatowski was sent to reside at Grodno, to await what further humiliations might be in store for him. The political leaders of the revolution were despatched to share the captivity of Kosciusko in St Petersburg. But the troops which were still in the field were allowed to capitulate upon honourable terms. On the death of Catharine (1796) her successor Paul released Kosciusko and his fellow-prisoners. After visits to England and America, the hero of the last phase of Polish independence found a peaceful home for many years in France. He ultimately died in Switzerland in 1817, having never revisited his native country.

Thus it was Russia, and not Prussia, which gained the military credit attaching to the suppression of the Polish insurrection; and Catharine II, who had already presided over two measures of partition, was enabled to dictate the ultimate fate of Poland. The general character of the negotiations, which took place at St Petersburg, is easily grasped. Catharine postponed any complete disclosure of her intentions until the success of Suvóroff was assured. Then she declared that the Russian frontier must be advanced to the Bug. Although this gave her the lion's share of the spoil, the other two Powers were too eager to gain her support for their own claims to venture upon any objection. The rest of Poland was left to be shared by Austria and Prussia, with Russia as arbitress of any disputes which might arise. From the very first, long before Warsaw

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had fallen, it was known that the demands of the two States were irreconcilable. Prussia had taken an active part in opposing the Polish rebels, had spent large sums of money, and had brought a considerable force into the field. Though the siege of Warsaw had been abandoned, Cracow and no small area of Poland had been and were still occupied by Prussian troops. Austria, on the other hand, had sent 15,000 soldiers to Lublin, but they had never even come into collision with the Polish forces. If, then, the shares were to be at all proportioned to effort or sacrifice Prussia could contend that she was entitled to far more consideration than Austria. But Thugut in his instructions had furnished the Austrian plenipotentiary with counterbalancing arguments on the other side. He laid great stress upon the fact that Austria had never received anything to compensate for the aggrandisement of the other States in 1793, and practically claimed a share in the previous as well as in the present partition. As regards sacrifice and effort, he pointed to the action of Austria in maintaining the common interests against France. Prussia had betrayed these interests and broken her plighted word, in order to be able to seek her own selfish gains in Poland.

If gratitude were a dominant force in politics, Russia should have given support to Prussia. It was Prussian intervention that had met the first vigour of the insurrection and had held it in check while Russia was for the moment powerless. In fact Prussia had rendered a double service, both by what she had done and by what she had left undone. She had succeeded in breaking the force of the rebellion, and had then stepped aside to allow Russia to administer the final blow. But an irksome obligation is as dangerous to international as to personal friendship. Russia did not wish to admit that Prussia had played any part in the overthrow of Poland. On the contrary, the Prussians had been too officious; they had tried to settle matters by themselves in order to gain an advantage over their neighbours, and had found the task more than they were able to perform. At a very early date it became clear that Russia would support Austria as against Prussia, just as Thugut had declared that he did not object to Russia having more of Poland provided that Prussia had less.

The two rival plenipotentiaries at St Petersburg were Cobenzl for Austria and Tauenzien for Prussia. Both had separate conferences with Ostermann, the Russian Chancellor, before the three met in a general congress on December 19. The proceedings on this occasion, therefore, present only a summary of what had already been discussed in greater detail. The main dispute turned upon the palatinates of Cracow and Sandomir. Both Austria and Prussia claimed them, and they were actually in the hands of Prussia. Cobenzl declared that no partition would be satisfactory to the Emperor, unless these districts were handed over to Austria. Ostermann, as he had already done in previous conferences, expressed the view that the Austrian demands were reasonable.

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Tauenzien rather feebly suggested that, if Russia wished to gratify the Emperor, this might be done out of the large territory which Russia had appropriated and not out of the small share of Prussia. Cobenzl broke in with the remark that Austria thoroughly approved of the demands of Russia; and the combination of two against one was apparent. Tauenzien, in obedience to his instructions, declared that, rather than hand over the disputed territories to Austria, Prussia would prefer to make no partition at all, and to leave Poland as it was in 1793.

This protest broke up the conference; but the action of Prussia had been anticipated and provided against beforehand. Russia and Austria proceeded to settle the matter between themselves, and on January 3, 1795, drew up their own arrangements for the Partition of Poland. The preamble of the treaty asserts that "Poland having been entirely subjected and conquered by the arms of the Empress," she has determined to arrange with her allies for a complete partition of that State, "which has shown an absolute incapacity to form a government which should enable it to live peaceably under the laws or to maintain itself in independence." The respective shares were defined by geographical boundaries. The Russian frontier was to start from Galicia along the Bug to Brzesc in Lithuania, thence in as straight a line as possible to Grodno, and from that town along the Niemen to the border of East Prussia. The Austrian share, which included Cracow and the disputed palatinates, extended the province of Galicia by adding to it the whole district between the Pilica, the Vistula, and the Bug. These acquisitions were to be guaranteed to each other by the two States. As soon as Prussia declared its adhesion to the treaty, that State was to receive the rest of Poland with a similar guarantee from Austria and Russia.

On the same day two further declarations were exchanged between the two contracting Powers. By the first Austria at last acceded to the second Treaty of Partition (January 23, 1793), thus accepting the promise of "good offices" for the exchange of the Netherlands for Bavaria. The second, which constituted a secret treaty of immense importance, was necessitated partly by the possibility that force would have to be employed to wrest from Prussia the districts which were to be given to Austria, partly by the desire on the part of Russia to reaffirm the alliance of the two Courts against Turkey, and partly by Thugut's strenuous persistence in demanding that Austria should receive some substantial indemnity both for the gains of Russia and Prussia in 1793, and for her own exertions in the war against France. The agreement as to an eventual partition of Turkey, contained in the autograph letters which Catharine and Joseph II had exchanged in 1782, was formally renewed. The engagement as to mutual aid in a future war with the Porte was extended to include the case of hostilities with Prussia. If that State attacked either of the allies, the other was to employ all its forces against "the common enemy." As to the claims of Austria for

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indemnities, Russia was to aid that State in obtaining them, either at the expense of France, or if that should be impossible by asserting the rights of Austria to large parts of the dominions of Venice, or by "such other project of acquisition as may suitably gain the desired end." This blank cheque to Austria, which was not to apply to any further spoliation of Turkey, can only have been intended to cover the possibility of annexations in Germany.

This secret treaty gives us the clue to Catharine's primary motive for supporting Austria against Prussia in the previous negotiations. It is very much the same motive which had induced her in 1780 to turn from her alliance with Frederick the Great to that with Joseph II. Prussia was a very useful ally against Poland, but a very useless ally against Turkey. Of Austria precisely the reverse might be said. Now that Poland was about to be obliterated, the Prussian alliance ceased to be of any great immediate value. On the other hand, when Poland was disposed of, the partition of Turkey, in which Austria was the destined accomplice, became at once the primary duty of Russia. Thugut had been clever enough to offer precisely the bribe which Russia was eager to accept. Leopold II had disconcerted Catharine by abandoning the policy of Joseph. Thugut was willing to return to it in order to humiliate Prussia; and Catharine was prompt to make him register the promise. No doubt she was also influenced by other reasons. She had always personally disliked Frederick William II; and she was especially irritated at this time by his incessant parade of those virtuous and honourable intentions, which his Ministers as constantly induced him to abandon. She thought that he had been suspiciously eager to take advantage of Russia's misfortunes at the beginning of Kosciusko's rebellion; and her malignant pleasure at the retreat from Warsaw served to show how chagrined she would have been by a complete Prussian triumph over the Poles.

Her ardent desire was that the two neighbouring States should continue to carry on the war against France, and that Russia should continue to hold aloof. With this aim she had inserted in the treaty of 1793 the clause which pledged the Prussian King to prolong his exertions in that war until its avowed objects had been obtained. In defiance of this pledge, and of the further obligations to the Maritime Powers under the Convention of the Hague, Prussia had done almost nothing in the campaign of 1794 and had since opened negotiations for a separate peace with the French Republic. Austria, on the other hand, had reasons of her own for continuing the struggle with France, and thus established another claim to Catharine's favour. But this at the same time made her the more annoyed with Prussia, because all hostile designs against Turkey would have to be postponed so long as Austria's hands were tied by the western war, while Prussia had the free disposal of all her forces. Finally, it was Catharine's interest to keep the balance fairly

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equal between the two great German States, and not to allow either to gain marked superiority over the other. In 1793 she had given Prussia a substantial reward, while Austria had been left in the cold. This was in itself a reason for taking the opposite course in 1795.

The Treaty of Partition was at first as carefully concealed as the more specifically secret treaty which accompanied it. Suspicions were entertained at Berlin, and they constituted one among many arguments for concluding the Treaty of Basel with France (April 5, 1795). But for some time there was no open act to justify suspicion. The Prussian troops remained in occupation of Cracow and the disputed palatinates; and no steps were taken even to demand their withdrawal. In fact, Austria was extremely afraid of the probable wrath of Prussia, and refused all suggestions from St Petersburg as to a communication of the treaty to the Court of Berlin until some 80,000 men had been collected on the Bohemian frontier to guard against attack. It was not till August 9 that the Russian and Austrian envoys made a joint announcement to the Prussian Ministers of the action of their respective governments. Prussia now discovered that since January 3 the two Courts had decided to carry out the very scheme of partition against which Tauenzien had so passionately protested.

The intelligence was in the highest degree unwelcome and disquieting, but it did not lead to war. Indeed, Frederick William had lost much of the buoyant confidence with which he had begun his reign. Since the Prussian intervention in Holland none of his undertakings had been crowned with conspicuous success. It is true that he had added to his dominions Danzig and Thorn with a considerable area of Polish territory; but these acquisitions, gratifying enough in themselves, had been made in a way which reflected no great credit upon Prussia. The turning-point in his reign had been the abandonment of the threatening attitude which he had assumed just before the conference at Reichenbach. From that date onward he had met with a series of disappointments. Prussia had not, indeed, experienced any crushing disaster. There had been nothing to show to the world those defects of the military system which were so conspicuous in 1806. But the cumulative effect of such events as the retreat from Champagne, the inaction of 1794 in the west, and the repulse from Warsaw in the east, was at least equivalent to the discredit which would have followed defeat in battle. Prussia was completely isolated in Europe; and neither the King nor his advisers dared to run the risk of an open rupture with Russia and Austria. They sullenly agreed to resume negotiations at St Petersburg; and Tauenzien was once more authorised to confer with Ostermann and Cobenzl.

On the 28th and 31st of August the plenipotentiaries met to discuss the same problems as before, and again they failed to remove the seemingly irreconcilable differences between Austria and Prussia. The Czarina was compelled to undertake the task of suggesting a compromise, which

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was in the end accepted. On October 24 the revised scheme of partition was rendered practicable by the agreement of the three contracting Powers. The Russian share was left absolutely unaltered ; but Austria agreed to give up a slip of territory between the Vistula, the Bug, and the Narew, which was necessary to give to Prussia secure possession of Warsaw. Prussian troops were to evacuate within six weeks the town of Cracow and all other territories which the treaty assigned to Austria. The precise limits between the Austrian and Prussian possessions on the side of the palatinate of Cracow were left to be fixed by commissioners from the two States, with a third commissioner on the part of Russia to act as mediator and, if need be, as arbitrator between his colleagues. This treaty was followed on November 25 by a formal abdication on the part of Stanislas Poniatowski. The deposed King was not ungenerously treated. His debts were paid and he received an adequate pension. After the death of Catharine he took up his residence in St Petersburg, and died there in 1798.

There remained several tangled threads to be separated before the Partition could be regarded as finally settled. The financial obligations both of the King and of the Polish State, together with the provision for the former's pension, had to be divided between the contracting Powers. The difficult question of the allegiance of landowners whose possessions lay in more than one of the three subdivisions had to be dealt with. Above all, the delimitation of the boundaries between the Austrian and Prussian territories gave rise to endless quarrels on points of detail ; and their settlement required equal tact and firmness on the part of the Czarina, in whose hands rested, as it had always done, the final decision between the conflicting pretensions of her neighbours. Catharine herself died on November 16, 1796, and left the formal ratification to her successor Paul. But the actual work had all been done before her death ; and the final treaty of January 26, 1797, is to be assigned to her guidance quite as much as any agreement drawn up in her lifetime. It consisted of three distinct documents. The first distributed in varying proportions the financial obligations which devolved upon the partitionary Powers, and decreed that there should be in the future no mixed or divided allegiance. Any possessor of land in more than one of the now separate parts of Poland must decide to which of the three States he wishes to belong, and must within five years sell or otherwise dispose of his property in what was thenceforth to be a foreign country. To this document was appended the act of abdication of the late King. A very lengthy "definitive act" laid down in minute detail the precise boundaries between the respective dominions wherever it was necessary to have artificial divisions. Finally, there was a brief secret article by which the three sovereigns, recognizing "the necessity of abolishing everything which may recall the memory of the existence of the kingdom of Poland," pledged themselves never to include such a designation among their various territorial titles.

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CHAPTER XVIII

BONAPARTE AND THE CONQUEST OF ITALY

At the close of the month of March, 1796, a young and inexperienced general arrived at Nice to take command of the French Army of Italy. Within a fortnight he gained his first victory over the Austrians in the pass that separates the Alps from the Apennines. On April 28 he forced their Piedmontese allies to sign an armistice, which detached the Court of Turin from the Coalition. In the next four weeks the French overran Lombardy and began the investment of Mantua. Three successive armies sent by the Habsburgs for the relief of that fortress were scattered in flight. In February, 1797, the Pope sued for terms from the regicide Republic; and on April 18, 1797, the young French commander compelled the Austrians to sign preliminaries of peace at Leoben, within eighty miles of their capital. These events were of more than passing importance. They stamped themselves deep into the life of Europe. Italy looks back on that year as the beginning of her new life. The future of democracy on the Continent of Europe was profoundly affected by the rapid rise of the French Republic to the rank of a great conquering Power; and the whole of the civilised world was to feel the results of a campaign which assured the future of Napoleon.

Events never march with this swift and easy decisiveness unless the strokes of a man of genius are helped by the weakness, folly, or disunion of his adversaries; and it will be well briefly to review those conditions, physical and political, which favoured the overthrow of Habsburg influence in Italy and the substitution for it of that of France.

It is a commonplace to assert that the fate of the peninsula ultimately depends on the power which holds the basin formed by the rivers Po and Adige. As Napoleon himself remarked at St Helena, Italy is too long for its breadth. Its defence must always lie in the chief passes of the Alps and in the lines of communication that traverse the neck of the peninsula, the district between Genoa and Venice. The Alps are a formidable barrier; but so numerous are their passes that a skilful enemy threatening Italy from the west has often been able to elude the defenders and to pour in his forces at some weakly guarded

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point in the long curving line been Savona and the Great St Bernard; and, when once a passage has been forced, the valley of the Po conducts the invader to this neck of the peninsula, few natural obstacles other than the affluents of the main stream impeding his progress. An army entering Italy from the west has far fewer obstacles to surmount than one coming from the north. The passes of the Maritime Alps are far shorter than those of the Tyrolese, Carnic, and Noric Alps; and an army marching from the west, after reaching the upper course of the river Po, can choose either bank of that stream for its line of march, and strike either at Mantua or at Bologna with no hindrance from the marshes and the two main rivers which stretch athwart the course of northern invaders. Consequently the peninsula has more often been successfully overrun from the side of France than from that of Austria; and the conqueror who firmly grips the neck of Italy has usually been able to reduce to submission the medley of States in the peninsula itself.

The political influence which one nation can exert upon another of diverse race and habits of mind rests ultimately on force. This is seen in the history of Italy, which shows us an intellectual but emasculated race for some centuries bowing its neck to French, Spanish, or German domination, feeling the last the most irksome, and despite many a set-back steadily reducing the area of imperial influence. In the eighteenth century, when the military prowess of Spain had declined and that of France was under a cloud, the Habsburgs gained the supremacy; at the outbreak of the war of the French Révolution they possessed the duchy of Milan, with Mantua and some scattered imperial fiefs further to the west. A Habsburg Archduke, Ferdinand III, also held the grand duchy of Tuscany, but made peace with France in February, 1795. Duke Ercole III of the ancient House of Este, who ruled over Modena, generally favoured Austrian policy, but remained neutral in the present war. Thus Austrian resources in Italy were limited to the straggling territory that stretched from the Simplon Pass to the fortress of Mantua on the south-east. The fortress of Alessandria then belonged to the kingdom of Sardinia; and the Habsburgs therefore owned no Italian stronghold of the first rank save Mantua. The strength of this city was undoubtedly great; but it suffered from the cardinal defect of the Austrian position in Italy, that of being wholly cut off from the Habsburg dominions north of the Alps, on which the defence of the Milanese ultimately depended. True, a right of way was claimed, and very freely used, by the Court of Vienna through the Venetian lands to the north of Mantua; but, though the political barrier grew weaker with every generation as the vitality of Venice declined, the obstacles which nature opposed became more formidable as armies came to depend more and more on artillery.

Weak as the neck of Italy always must be, it was still further weakened by political division. Far from being held as a whole by a

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great military Power, it was shared between Austria, the Duke of Modena, the Duke of Parma (a timid priest-ridden descendant of the Spanish Bourbons), the papal See, and the moribund oligarchy of Venice. The Pope had broken off diplomatic relations with France not long after the seizure of Avignon, but for the present limited his hostility to the launching of spiritual thunders against the sacrilegious Republic. Venice, a prey to a cramping oligarchy and enervating luxury, long wavered between hatred of French democracy and fear of Austrian aggression, and finally fell back on the policy of doing nothing, which was fast sapping its power, as also that of its ancient rival, Genoa.

Alone among Italian States, the kingdom of Sardinia kept up something of its former vigour. King Victor Amadeus III throughout his long reign had sought to beautify his capital, to promote industry and agriculture, and to spread wealth more widely by relieving rich monasteries of some of their superfluous lands and treasures. But his chief interest lay in his army. To bring it up to the level of that of Frederick the Great was the passion of his life; and to secure perfection on the parade-ground he ultimately sacrificed the energy of his subjects and the equilibrium of his finances. As father-in-law of the French Princes, the Comte de Provence and the Comte d'Artois, he was among the first to enter on hostilities with the French Revolution (1792); but he soon saw his outlying Provinces, Savoy and Nice, overrun; and the military help which Austria grudgingly gave hardly availed to hold the French at bay in the passes of the Maritime Alps. The old King's hatred of France scarcely abated even when the Court of Vienna imposed very onerous terms on its hard-pressed ally in the Treaty of Valenciennes (May 23, 1794). The Piedmontese, on the other hand, were weary of a struggle which brought them face to face with political and financial ruin, mainly, as it seemed, in the interests of an overbearing and not very active confederate; and everything showed that their proverbial patience and loyalty were strained almost to the breaking point.

Nowhere else in Italy could there be found a tithe of the manly vigour, warlike prowess, and administrative capacity that had hitherto marked the people and government of the little subalpine realm. The opposites of these qualities were to be seen in an extreme form in the kingdom of Naples. Ferdinand IV, a scion of the Spanish Bourbons, and his Queen, Marie-Caroline, were an ill-matched couple; the nickname of *il Rè lazzarone* fitly sums up the personality of the King, while his domineering consort gave free play to spasmodic impulses such as had marred the career of her sister, Marie-Antoinette. The execution of that helpless captive fanned Queen Caroline's hatred of the French Revolution to a fury which brought her at times to the verge of madness; but the periods of indolence or despair that generally followed imparted to the policy of the Neapolitan Court a zigzag course which perplexed and exasperated its allies. Eventually, a small force was sent northwards

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to help the Austrians against the French; but, apart from thirteen squadrons of excellent cavalry, this aid was of little account; it arrived in small detachments, and so late as to effect nothing.

This brief survey will show that, if a French army could break through the outer line of defence, there was little to stay its progress until the Austrian defenders rested on their immediate base, the stronghold of Mantua. The very district wherein lay the ultimate means of defending Italy was that which was most divided among puny or decadent States; and there was no strength or unity in the peninsula that could retrieve the day when once a conqueror firmly held the lines of the Mincio and Adige. The organising genius and military prowess of ancient Rome had finally failed to hold up against the difficulties inherent in the defence of Italy; and the old Roman spirit now seemed utterly extinct. In place of it there was seen a petty particularism which hindered all attempts at union, and a disposition to welcome the French as liberators from the heavy yoke of the Habsburgs, or the dull *régime* of Doge, King, and Cardinal. Milan was the headquarters of the Gallic and Jacobin propaganda. This was not surprising, seeing that the Milanese had to pay a considerable sum every year to escape the severities of the Austrian militia system, and had in all handed over 70,000,000 florins in tribute to the Court of Vienna during forty-seven years. The Guelf feeling against the "barbarians" had never wholly died out even in the years of political torpor that weighed down Italy before the outbreak of the French Revolution; and the sight of a whole nation springing to arms in 1793 and hurling back the trained armies of Austria, Prussia, England, Spain, and Sardinia, sent a thrill of excitement through the peninsula. The "Rights of Man" seemed to summon all peoples to a new political life; and the victories of the *sansculottes* served to clinch the beliefs of enthusiasts that the old monarchies were doomed to fall, and that the future lay with regenerated and militant nations.

The French representative at Genoa carefully fed these hopes; and the Committee of Public Safety sent sums of money for the support of the Jacobin clubs which sprang up in the chief Italian towns. These clubs, frequently held in connexion with Masonic lodges, were most numerous in the south, where the capricious despotism of Queen Caroline and the grinding pressure of feudal abuses predisposed men to revolt; in the Legations of the Papal States, where the memory of former civic liberties embittered men against the torpid yet exasperating rule of an unchanging clericalism; and in Lombardy, where the earlier promises of reforms by the Habsburgs were belied by the severities of a timorous reaction. At Palermo the innate repugnance of an island people to a despotism exercised from the mainland found expression in a Jacobin plot, for which a young advocate, di Blasi, and three others, were executed (May, 1795). In the previous year, at Bologna, hatred of the rule of

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the Pope's Legate led to a similar hapless attempt by a young townsman, Luigi Zamboni, and a student of the university, di Rolandis di Castel-Alfeo, who were afterwards honoured as the first martyrs of the *Risorgimento*. At Milan the grip of the *Tedeschi* was too strong to admit of active resistance by the numerous clubs that spread the network of intrigue throughout Lombardy; for the present they watched the progress of the French with eager interest and wove subtle schemes to help them. Even in loyal Piedmont the Jacobins gained a following as the war ran its weary course, and a few desperadoes hatched a plot for opening the gates of Turin to the French. Two of the ringleaders suffered death for their folly (July, 1794); but the affair showed that the old order of things was doomed, and that sweeping changes must take place so soon as the Republicans burst through the outer ring of defence on the west.

What were the forces on which rested the difficult duty of holding the western passes against the French? They consisted of two armies, the Austrian and Sardinian; the effective strength of which in the month of March, 1796, may be reckoned at somewhat below 32,000 and 20,000 men, respectively. These numbers by no means represented the whole fighting strength. The Austrians had nearly as many more in garrison or cantoned in Lombardy, the Mantuan, and Tyrol; but half of these were raw troops or militia. As many as 20,000 Piedmontese troops were watching the passes of the Maritime Alps from Coni to Susa and Aosta; in fact, the total of the Sardinian forces, inclusive of 30,000 ill-armed and partly disaffected militia, was placed as high as 80,000 men; but its fighting strength was barely half of that estimate, even if we reckon in the auxiliary corps of 5000 men under General Provera, which the Habsburgs had placed at the disposal of their allies. The strength of the Sardinian army lay in the infantry, which was brave, and for the most part inured to mountain warfare; the cavalry and artillery were inferior in quality; and the efficiency of all branches of the service was dulled by a slavish adherence to promotion by seniority, by dislike of the Austrian alliance, and by a long succession of defeats.

Much the same may be said of the Imperialist forces, with this cause of weakness superadded: that, being recruited from the many distinct peoples under the Habsburg sway, they had little of that cohesion which in time of disaster enables beaten fragments quickly to reunite and present a threatening front. Many of the Habsburg regiments were excellent, and the cavalry ranked as the finest in Europe; but all through the service was felt the blighting breath of Court influence, which set aside deserving men in favour of carpet knights, and had raised to the higher ranks many officers who were incompetent at all times and even showed cowardice when face to face with danger. Merit, on the other hand, too often languished in obscurity. Thus, when this antiquated system was pitted against one that had ruthlessly sent military misfits to the

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guillotine, and even now thrust them aside in favour of active and able men, it was doomed to overthrow by that inexorable law which ordains the survival of the fittest. Of this law French democrats were the militant exponents; while the cumbrous War Council and the intriguing cliques of Vienna and Milan furnish the classical instance in modern warfare of that habit of following the broad and easy way of routine and favouritism which has so often led old monarchies to destruction.

Nor was there any solidarity of interest or feeling between the Austrian and Sardinian armies. To this lack of cohesion may largely be attributed the defeats which they had suffered in the years 1793–5. The chief of these, inflicted by Masséna near Loano on November 23, 1795, cost them 5000 prisoners and 80 cannon, besides yielding to the Republicans the whole of the Genoese Riviera as far as Savona and the pass to the north of that town. The Austrian commander, de Wins, was thereupon replaced by the septuagenarian Beaulieu, a Belgian subject of the Emperor. He had served with credit, if not with distinction, in the Low Countries; but his appointment seems to have been due very largely to the hopes entertained by the Courts of Vienna and Turin that his warm friendship with the Sardinian commander, Colli, would impart to the operations that unity of aim that had hitherto been fatally lacking. Events, however, were to show that the divergence of interests was too serious to be set right by the friendliness of the commanders-in-chief; and in other respects the choice of so old a man as Beaulieu was in itself a disaster. He had none of that physical and mental buoyancy which enabled Blücher at the same age to soar above discouragement; above all, he lacked both the insight which sees the path of safety in a crisis and the force of character which inspires bands of runaways to renew the fight.

The mishaps which call to the front the born leaders of men revealed no such man on the Austrian side, save a few colonels of regiments for whom their military system could find no fitting sphere. Beaulieu was poorly seconded by Argenteau, whose *insouciance* had largely contributed to the defeat at Loano. Court influence not only led to his acquittal on that count, but sent him back with the rank of Field-Marshal; and his confidence in the favour of the Archduke Ferdinand, who controlled affairs at Milan, prompted him to independent conduct that helped to mar the campaign. The Lieutenant Field-Marshals, Sebottendorf and Melas, were more competent and more obedient than Argenteau, though old age already weighed upon Melas. Liptay, Pittone, and the heroic Rukavina, were good divisional leaders, but found little opportunity for the exercise of their best qualities. Indeed, except in the most seasoned regiments, the Imperialists displayed the passive virtues of loyalty in spite of official discouragements, and fortitude amidst defeats, rather than the dash and enterprise that achieve great results. Of the Sardinian commander, Colli, little need be said, save that, in

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spite of growing infirmities, he struggled hard to retrieve an extremely difficult situation.

The reports sent to the British Foreign Office by Eden and Trevor, our ambassadors at Vienna and Turin, reveal the discouragement which beset both of those Courts after the defeat at Loano. Thugut, the Austrian Chancellor, assured Eden that, unless Great Britain furnished another loan of £3,000,000, and Russia sent troops instead of good wishes, the Emperor must be content with waging a defensive war, "waiting the effect which the distresses and distractions of France may produce." As for the Habsburg States, they were exhausted; and a strong party was working for peace. The Sardinian Court, wrote Trevor on January 30, 1796, was in the depths of despair, and longed to conclude an armistice so as to screen the little realm from a French incursion. The King would persevere, but with little hope of success as long as Austria maintained a defensive strategy which left Piedmont open to the worst blows. A change of system was needed; for the rivalries of the Austrian generals and the intrigues of the governing clique at Milan clogged all the operations. The Sardinian Court was then proposing at Vienna that Victor Amadeus should have the supreme command of both armies, with Beaulieu as Quartermaster-General. This suggestion and that of an armistice in Italy aroused angry feelings at Vienna; for, as Trevor phrased it in his despatch of February 9, "it had the air of saying, 'If you do not think it worth your while to assist us, we can and will make peace with France.'" As a matter of fact the Republic had sought to entice Sardinia to make a separate peace by proposing a joint conquest of the Milanese and the session of this splendid province to Sardinia in exchange for Savoy and Nice. Victor Amadeus had spurned the offer, but some of his counsellors intrigued for peace, which they averred was necessary now that Austria had concluded an armistice on the Rhine and Great Britain was withholding the promised subsidies.

For the British government had also shown signs of wavering. It would far exceed the limits of our space adequately to set forth the little known plan of preparing for a general peace which Pitt and Grenville began to draw up in the autumn of 1795. It took definite form in the despatch of December 22, penned by Grenville, our Foreign Minister, to Eden, in which he explained that France was obviously in need of peace, and proposed that, even if she made no overtures, the British and Austrian governments should jointly declare their willingness to receive and consider any proposals for a general pacification. The consideration of the terms on which peace might be made naturally took time, especially as the Emperor demurred to some of the British suggestions; but the matter was still being discussed when the Italian Campaign of 1796 opened up a new cycle of war and relegated the proposals of the Court of St James to a world that had seemingly passed

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away for ever. Yet they had one disastrous practical issue. In the hope of realising peace Grenville directed Eden and Trevor to hold back British subsidies as far as possible; and thus both the Austrian and Sardinian armies were left badly equipped and wholly unfited to withstand the terrific blows now to be showered upon them.

There are crises in the great drama of human development when every conceivable circumstance seems to further the rise of a genius. Truly this was the case at the beginning of the year 1796. Never did the stars shed a more baleful influence than on the men who then were scheming and striving on behalf of the monarchical cause, when ally thwarted ally, and even keen-sighted statesmen deemed that the weary struggle between the Revolution and the Kings was about to end in stale-mate. The genius was at hand who willed otherwise. A young player saw that the game had scarcely begun. In a corner of the board, where little of note had yet been accomplished, a bewildering development was now to take place. This new opening was the Italian Campaign; the name of the player was Napoleon Bonaparte.

The future conqueror was the second surviving child of Charles-Marie Bonaparte and his wife Letizia (*née* Ramolino), and was born at Ajaccio in 1769. At that time France was fastening her grip on Corsica, the claim to which she had cheaply acquired from the Genoese Republic. The young Napoleon later shared to the full the resentment felt by the islanders at this shabby proceeding; and, though his family was of patrician rank on both sides, and had formerly upheld the Genoese party, he long showed a strongly insular spirit, which in no wise abated during his time of education in France, first at Brienne, and afterwards at the "*École Militaire*" in Paris. Indeed, he declared that he would never forgive his father for deserting the cause of the Corsican champion Paoli. Even when he entered the French army as *sous-lieutenant* in the artillery regiment La Fère (1785), he spent all his spare time in studying Rousseau and as many historical works as his scanty means could procure in order to equip himself for writing a book, and thereby proving the right of the Corsicans to be free and nerving them for the future struggle with France.

These insular feelings, however, slowly died away as the spell of the French Revolution and its message, *la carrière ouverte aux talents*, wrought on his spirit, arousing some hopes for the future of mankind and opening up golden vistas to his own boundless egotism. In his second very prolonged furlough in Corsica he came to an open feud with Paoli, who declared for severance from France and union with England; and the young officer, worsted in the ensuing strife, fled with his family to the coast of Provence. There his untiring energy, his skill in the organisation of artillery, and his faculty of seeing to the heart of a problem, largely contributed to the recapture of Toulon from the English, Spanish, and Neapolitan forces; and, subsequently, as commander of

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the artillery of the Army of Italy, he had a share in drafting at Colmars a memorable plan (May 21, 1794) adopted by the Commissioners, for uniting the Army of the Alps to the Army of Italy, and thus changing an ineffective defensive into a vigorous offensive which should carry the French far down the valley of the river Stura. He also took a prominent part in the campaign that gradually edged the Austro-Sardinian forces from the Col di Tenda and along the coast back to Savona. In July he was charged by the Commissioner, Ricord, with a secret mission: to inspect Savona and Genoa, to counteract Austrian intrigues at the latter city, and to gain all the military news possible. Then it was that he saw the importance of the pass north of Savona; and he seems to have been the moving spirit in the subsequent operations which finally drove the Allies from that pass and from their position at Dego. There, amidst the northern spurs of the Apennines, he gazed down the valley of the eastern Bormida, which was to be his avenue to fame, and at the close of the final conflict he penned these notable words, "The Battle of Dego would have been decisive against the Emperor, in his Lombard States, if we had had three hours more daylight." This sentence, throbbing with baffled eagerness, but instinct with prescience, contains the thought-germ of the Italian Campaign.

At present nothing more could be done, for the Commissioner, Albitte, refused to allow any prolonged pursuit of the Austrians, and any decisive movement against the Sardinians at Ceva such as might have brought them to sue for peace. The whirligig of Parisian affairs also brought Bonaparte's life into sudden danger. The overthrow of Robespierre in Thermidor led to a close scrutiny of the actions of all those who, like the young general of artillery, had been on friendly terms with the younger brother of the Terrorist chief; and Ricord's action in sending Bonaparte on the secret mission to Genoa led to the arrest of the latter. He was cast into prison, and owed his life and his release only to the pressing need that was felt of good artillery officers. For some months the Committee of Public Safety and the commander of the Army of Italy advised a defensive policy in the south-east. In March, 1795, an order came for Bonaparte to take an infantry command in the Vendée War. He delayed his departure for two months, but, on his arrival at Paris, refused, on the plea of ill-health, to proceed to his new sphere of duty. Amidst poverty and doubt as to the future he at times fell a prey to misanthropy, and shook off the Jacobinical creed that had hitherto partially checked the dictates of his own egotism. "Life is but a light dream that soon vanishes," he wrote to his brother Joseph. But now, as earlier, he studied hard and gained that knowledge of history and the art of war which was to serve him so well. He was girding himself for the task of writing a history of recent events, when the news that Kellermann and the Army of Italy had been beaten back along the coast nerved him to work out in detail the plan of campaign which he

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had drafted in the summer of 1794, and which (so Volney assured Chaptal) he trenchantly set forth in the autumn to the Commissioner Turreau at Nice.

In quick succession he now, in July, 1795, drew up two *Mémoires* for the Committee of Public Safety. In the earlier of these (No. 50 of the official *Correspondance de Napoléon I*) he urged that the Army of Italy should be strongly reinforced from the Army of the Pyrenees (peace being then almost assured with Spain); and that Loano and Vado should be recaptured, so that during the winter positions could be secured whence overwhelming pressure might be brought to bear on the Court of Turin. Then, in the favourable season — February to Midsummer — the *sansculottes* must overrun Lombardy, replenish their stores in that fertile land, blockade Mantua, penetrate into Tyrol, and, joining hands with the Army of the Rhine, compel the Emperor to accept terms from the Republic. The later *Mémoire* (No. 49) is more detailed. In it Bonaparte assumed that the Army of the Pyrenees could send large reinforcements which would enable the Republicans to advance with numbers at least equal to those of the enemy; he also pointed out, in terms very like those set forth in his earlier scheme, that as the French forces were at present spread over a semicircle, in a barren and mountainous country from Loano to the St Bernard, while the enemy held the diameter, the defensive was not only more costly but far more dangerous than the most daring offensive. The French must pierce into this semicircle and drive the Austrians from the positions whence they controlled the King of Sardinia; the Allies could easily be separated, for the Austrians would by preference defend Lombardy, while the Sardinians must guard the entrance to Piedmont. Peace being assured with the Court of Turin, Lombardy could with ease be overrun, Mantua seized, and Tyrol invaded, as he had previously indicated. The key to the whole problem is thus stated, "Nature has limited France to the Alps, but she has also limited the Empire to Tyrol."

This, then, is the basis of the confidence which the young officer felt. The doctrines of Rousseau concerning the influence of nature on man, the principles of strategy, and the teaching of history as to the events that make and unmake empires, alike proclaimed the futility of a northern race striving to hold a straggling fraction of the soil of Italy in face of a great popular impulse championed by a powerful invader. In truth, so striking were the arguments of these two *Mémoires* that they helped to procure for their writer from Pontécoulant the post of assistant at the Topographic Bureau of the Committee of Public Safety (August 19); and the instructions sent by that body to Kellermann at once breathed a livelier tone than before. Schérer took the place of Kellermann, and the arrival of 16,000 splendid fighting men from the Army of the Pyrenees helped to secure the decisive victory near Loano; but, despite Masséna's fiery pursuit of the enemy almost as far as Dego, the new

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commander-in-chief failed to rise to the height of the situation. He stopped short at the very point where the grand campaign should have begun. This was what Bonaparte pointed out in further notes to the Committee. For a time his name had been removed from the list of general officers owing to the discovery of his prolonged refusal to take up his command in the Vendée, but he more than recovered his former position by the skill and vigour that he displayed when suddenly appointed to help Barras during the fateful day of 13 Vendémiaire. With the enhanced prestige which he now enjoyed, he showed incisively (January 19, 1796) that, while the Austrians were flying beyond Acqui, the victors should have turned aside so as to crush the Sardinians at their entrenched camp of Ceva, and force the Court of Turin to sue for peace; then "We enter Lombardy, as if it were Champagne, without obstacles." This plan attracted the attention of the Committee, which pressed it on Schérer, only to receive the wearily cynical reply that the man who had formed it had better come to carry it out. The Committee took him at his word, and decided on February 29, 1796, that he should be replaced by Bonaparte. The appointment was ratified on March 2.

It is needful to dwell on these facts, for they refute the statements frequently made that the young general owed his position to female influence. In the month of January he gained the hand of Joséphine de Beauharnais, a young widow of Creole extraction, one of the most fascinating figures in the gay *salon* of Mme Tallien. Though scandalous tongues named her one of the mistresses of Barras, the young general conceived for her a passion of southern intensity, which she at first coquettishly fanned until its fiery force puzzled and alarmed her. Doubtfully and languidly, her Creole nonchalance yielded to the insistence of her suitor, for she noted that his hawk-like gaze gained ascendancy over all, even over the Directors themselves. Her chief consolation was that, if she married the needy young man, Barras would help to gain him the command of the Army of Italy; and there seemed ground for hoping that, worn by constant study and hardships and a prey to a malarial fever contracted at Toulon, he would find in the peninsula either speedy death or imperishable renown. As for Bonaparte he accepted the promise of Barras' help with his usual unbending pride, that flashed out in the scorn with which he spoke to Joséphine of the envy shown by his former comrades, "Do they think that I need patronage to succeed? They will be only too happy for me to grant them mine. My sword is at my side, and with it I shall go far." He knew full well that his promotion was due to his plan of campaign which would bear him on to fortune. He was right. Carnot had, as far back as 1794, seen the need of some such scheme of operations, but had hitherto failed to find any man fitted to carry them out. Pondering on the proved courage of Bonaparte, together with the intellectual eminence reflected in his plan of campaign, he judged that his daring spirit, strategic genius, and knowledge of the

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country, must achieve great results in the policy of war and conquest on which the Directors were now firmly bent. In 1799 he declared that it was he who had proposed Bonaparte's appointment; and the testimony of another Director, Larevellière-Lépeaux, also proves that it was not brought about by Barras and female intrigues. On March 9 the marriage took place; and after a honeymoon of two days the young commander left his bride and set out for the headquarters at Nice, where he arrived on March 27.

He found the Army of Italy in a state of confusion and discouragement. The whole district had been swept bare of supplies, and the English fleet often intercepted those coming from Genoa or Leghorn; some of the regiments were half in rags, and all of them grumbled loudly at the arrears of pay and the peculations of contractors. Schérer's softness had lowered the tone of the whole army; and the remodelling of the regimental system, which was still proceeding, gave many an outlet for the utterance of mutinous threats. As for the generals, they looked with pity or disdain on the pale thin figure which, on the strength of a victory gained in the streets of Paris, ventured to take up this impossible task. They were speedily undeceived. The tall swashbuckler, Augereau, who at first almost openly mocked at the "lath of a man," speedily fell under the power of his keen grey eyes and curt, masterful speech; Masséna, proud of his recent triumphs, that cast into the shade all Bonaparte's exploits, received him with bluff *camaraderie*, which was checked at once by the magic of genius; and he soon had to own the superiority of military science to the mere fighting instincts which his own life of hardship and struggle had so keenly whetted. For the rest, the stern old Sérurier, the warlike Swiss La Harpe, the gallant Cervoni, and others, soon proved their worth. With the aid of the friends whom Bonaparte brought from Paris — Berthier, the most methodical, hard-working, and intelligent of executants, a man whose strength and devotion set at naught days and nights of almost ceaseless toil; Murat, already known as a dashing officer of cavalry; the sardonic but very able Marmont; that trusty friend and almost puritanical zealot, Duroc, along with his opposite, the bright, vain, and sociable Junot — order began to be evolved from chaos at the headquarters at Nice. Funds were raised from local banks to meet the most pressing needs; peculations were promptly stopped; the troops were fired by the prospect of glory and plenty which the new commander held out as theirs in the fertile plains of Italy; and — significant change — he called them not *citoyens* but *soldats*. For the first time, too, he thoroughly identified himself with the French by writing his name *Bonaparte*.

At the beginning of the month of April the military situation was as follows. The French army was spread out widely from Nice to Loano, and thence up to and even beyond Savona. In fact, one of Schérer's last acts had been, on the request of the Commissioner Salicetti, to despatch

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a brigade to Voltri, in order to bring pressure to bear upon the Genoese government and induce them to grant a loan. The results of this move were so marvellously favourable to the French that it has been inscribed in the Napoleonic legend as a first signal proof of the young commander's foresight in seeking to lure Beaulieu and half of his army into the Riviera. But the despatches of Schérer award to him the responsibility for this move; while Bonaparte's letter of April 6 to the Directors proves no less clearly that he disapproved of it as arousing Genoa to hostility and the somnolent Austrians to nervous watchfulness. In truth, his "star" never shone more auspiciously than at the dawn of his career. This will be evident if we review the plans of the Allies. In an interview which Colli had with Beaulieu at Alessandria on March 27 he strongly urged a joint forward movement in two massed columns, the Austrians driving the French from Dego in on Savona, while the Sardinians were to strike through a more westerly pass at Loano, and thus cut the hostile line in half. This admirable plan did not please Beaulieu. In its place he proposed to hustle the French all along their front; and, as soon as he heard of the move of their vanguard on Voltri, he withdrew troops from Dego, in order to meet it face to face in the Genoese Riviera, and refused to trust to the plan of cutting its communications at Savona, which Colli pointed out would produce the same result in a more trenchant manner. The scheme adopted by the Austrian commander bristled with faults, the worst being that it led to a dangerous dispersion of force, as the column sent through the Bocchetta Pass, north of Genoa, and then along the narrow coast-line, must be almost entirely severed from the centre at Dego by the Apennines. Indeed, so grave were the risks involved by this severance of forces in proportion to the military results thereby attainable, that the whole movement has often been ascribed to a design of the Austrians to seize Genoa; but the despatches of the English Minister at Turin show that rumour had greatly magnified the French force at Voltri; and it is also known that Beaulieu wished to concert with Nelson a plan for capturing it entirely at that seaport. Early in April he therefore led some 10,000 men in that direction, while Argenteau at the centre in front of Dego disposed of a smaller force for the seizure of Savona. The Sardinian army, numbering little more than 20,000 men, was farther away to the west at, and to the front of, the camp of Ceva.

Well served by his spies at Genoa and Turin, Bonaparte heard of these faulty dispositions and prepared to deal out prompt punishment. Directing Cervoni at Voltri to hold firm and then to fall back slowly before superior forces, he himself hurried to Savona and took command of the 13,000 men already grouped thereabouts under the command of Masséna. The French outposts held the heights dominating the pass that led northwards to Carcare and Dego; one of these bodies, commanded by Fornésy and Rampon, occupied an old fort on Monte Legino

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and bravely beat off the attacks of Argenteau's vanguard (April 11). Reinforced in the night by Masséna and La Harpe, the Republicans fiercely assailed Argenteau very early on the morrow; their dense columns speedily drove in his force, only 3000 strong, through the upper and lower parts of the village of Montenotte, and he rallied scarcely 700 men at Dego. Bonaparte, from a height further to the west, witnessed this running fight, but bent all his energy to the task of hurrying up the divisions of Joubert and Augereau, comprising 8000 men in all, along the high road through Carcare, which the folly of Beaulieu and the timidity of the Sardinians had left open. Up its slopes cannon and stores could be sent with ease — it was known by the peasants as the "road of cannon" — and at nightfall of the 12th a French army of nearly 20,000 men strongly held Carcare and its neighbouring summits. The first part of the campaign was won. Bonaparte had sundered the feeble link that held together the allied forces at the head of the forked road leading towards Alessandria and Turin, and could carry out the long-cherished plan of crushing them in detail.

But now the Sardinians were on the alert; Provera and a handful of brave men threw themselves into the old castle of Cosseria, to the west of Carcare, and beat off several attacks of Augereau's best troops. Other parts of the French forces, however, drove the foe from the village of Millesimo (April 13); and on the morrow Provera saw himself cut off and compelled by lack of food to surrender. Relieved of all immediate danger on the west, but still careful to keep his headquarters nearly midway between the smaller armies of the Allies, Bonaparte now sent Masséna and La Harpe against Dego. This strong position, commanding the valley of the eastern Bormida, was held by some 4000 Austrians, who beat off all frontal attacks, until Masséna, working round the hills to the east, surrounded the place and brought about a capitulation (April 14). Argenteau, meanwhile, lay strangely inactive a short distance away. Elated by their victory and exasperated by the lack of food, the French spread out widely in search of the supplies which Bonaparte's severest orders failed to extort from his base on the coast. Early on the morrow the victors, while still buried in drunken slumber, were assailed by five battalions led by Vukassovich, which Beaulieu had sent from Voltri to keep touch with his centre, and were driven headlong from the town. It needed a second attack to regain Dego; and this time the Austrians cut their way through to Acqui. The incident is of interest as showing that the Imperialists, when well led, were fully equal to the French, and also that, if Argenteau had acted with energy on the previous day, he might perhaps have saved the situation. The opportunity was now lost; Beaulieu swiftly retired inland to Acqui, threw the burden of blame on Argenteau, whom he disgraced, and drew in his scattered forces to that town.

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The Sardinians, cut off by a long unbroken ridge from the remains of the Austrian centre, were now to feel the full weight of Bonaparte's blows. The young leader was eager to reap every advantage from the central position he had so easily seized. Leaving La Harpe to observe Acqui, he turned fiercely against the entrenched camp of Ceva in the valley of the Tanaro. There Colli had checked Augereau severely on the 16th; but now, seeing his communications with Turin threatened by the irruption of other French columns, he left but a scanty force to hold that camp, and withdrew early on the 17th to St Michel. Again he dealt the French vanguard, under Sérurier, a sharp blow. Bonaparte, however, drawing up fresh troops from Ormea — his new line of communications with Nice — outflanked and hustled the Piedmontese as they sought to take position at Mondovi, and speedily scattered their array (April 21). A prey to discouragement, even before the campaign began, the Sardinians were now in the depths of despair; and Bonaparte, pressing remorselessly on their rear, received the first proposals for an armistice (April 22). These he refused until the arrival of fresh troops enabled him to extort harder terms. He then, when near Cherasco, entertained the Piedmontese envoys with quiet dignity, but threatened an attack on that town unless his final conditions were speedily accepted. Having 38,000 men at hand, besides 7000 rapidly drawing near to the Col di Tenda, while scarcely 10,000 Sardinian regulars barred the road to Turin, he had that Court at his mercy; for Beaulieu, meanwhile, made but the feeblest of efforts to stretch a helping hand to his hard-stricken allies. The armistice of Cherasco was accordingly signed at 2 a.m. on the 28th; it assured the complete neutrality of the kingdom of Sardinia, and the occupation by the French of the fortresses of Coni, Ceva, Tortona, and (provisionally) of Alessandria, while they also had the right of passing through Valenza. The gain of Coni was in itself a great advantage, as it opened up direct communication with Nice and left the British fleet powerless to intercept supplies. Requisitions were also laid without mercy on the southern part of Piedmont, as well as on Genoa, for having suffered the breach of its neutrality by the Allies. Bonaparte furthermore asked for 15,000 men to be sent to him from Kellermann's Army of the Alps; and, by dint of representing himself as dangerously weak in front of a powerful foe, he gained the promise of fully 10,000 men from that quarter. He also sought by all possible arguments to induce the Directors to conclude peace with the Court of Turin, so as to leave the Army of Italy free for the grand designs to which his brilliant successes had been merely the prelude.

Meanwhile he endeavoured to help on the negotiations by aiming another blow at Beaulieu. Again he succeeded. Though delayed by the lack of ammunition and even of shoes, he pressed hard on the retreating Austrians, and induced them to believe that he would cross the river Po at Valenza, into which town the terms of the armistice, designedly made

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public, gave him the right to enter. While this device held no small part of the Austrian forces on the direct road into Lombardy, that which runs through Valenza and Pavia, Bonaparte hurried two powerful columns towards Stradella and Piacenza on the south bank of the Po, where there were few natural obstacles to hinder the advance. "My intention" (he wrote on May 6) "is to cross [the river Po] as near as possible to Milan so as to have no more obstacles before reaching that capital. By this means I shall turn the three lines of defence that Beaulieu has arranged along the rivers Agogna, Terdoppio, and Ticino." The crossing at Piacenza evidently offered most advantages; still he subordinated this masterly flanking move to the facts of the situation. In the same letter he wrote that if Beaulieu evacuated all the district between Valenza and Pavia he would quietly cross at Valenza; but, if the enemy did not divine his secret, then Piacenza would be his place of crossing if boats were found there. Simplicity in the general design, a skilful persistence in dovetailing subordinate movements into that design, and a prudent pliability in the choice of means — such were the characteristics of Bonaparte's warfare even at the outset, as they have been those of all great leaders.

Fortune once more showered on him the favours which she rarely withholds from those who neglect no means of winning them. Beaulieu was weakly striving to guard all the crossings — an impossible task with his small army — and on the morning of May 7 sent Liptay with 5000 men (a force which the French have always represented as 8000) to seize Piacenza; the French vanguard, under the intrepid Lannes, was just in time to seize boats and make good its hold on the northern bank when, near nightfall, Liptay's scouts appeared. During the night Augereau's division, the "fighting" division of the army, came up, reinforced that of Dallemagne, and helped him on the morrow to throw back the Austrians on the village of Fombio. There an obstinate fight took place, but an energetic flank movement led to Liptay's hurried retreat towards Pizzighettone. Meanwhile Beaulieu, with the main body, advanced to help his lieutenant, only to find Fombio and its environs strongly held by the French. Even so, his unexpected approach at nightfall caused a panic among the French, during which La Harpe was killed; but Berthier and Dallemagne restored order and beat off the assailants. A renewed attack in force by Beaulieu might still have placed the French in grave danger; but he rather tamely made off towards Lodi.

Bonaparte now saw the importance of driving the enemy beyond the river Adda in order to deprive the Sardinians of their last hope of aid from their allies; and he accordingly pressed on Beaulieu's track. That leader was too dispirited to try his fortune even on the banks of the Adda, and left the defence of the town and bridge of Lodi to his lieutenant, Sebottendorf, who with 9600 men was hurrying back from

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Pavia. On the morning of May 10 the French drove this column into Lodi, which they entered with little resistance shortly before noon. Bonaparte prudently gave his men a time of rest in the town, which lies on the west side of the river, while he cannonaded the enemy on the lower and more exposed bank opposite. Sebottendorf's only desire was to effect his retreat so as to join the main body; but he now ordered a stand to be made at the bridge and along the banks of the Adda. Having drawn up more troops, Bonaparte ordered the cavalry to proceed northwards and cross by a ford higher up the stream, while, under cover of the buildings of Lodi, he himself made ready a column of picked troops, headed by grenadiers, who were to carry the bridge by a rush. Shortly after five o'clock he launched this column from the shelter of the town at the long, narrow bridge; despite the redoubled fire of the enemy it gained half the length, but then faltered beneath the storm. At once the leaders, Masséna and his aides-de-camp, Lautour and Reille, together with Berthier, Lannes, and Cervoni, rushed to rally the leading files; again they pressed forward, only to waver again, under the terrible flank and frontal fire. A second column now gave weight to the attack; some scores of its men, seeing that the river was fordable on the further side, swarmed down the wooden supports of the bridge to a sandbank, waded thence to the shore, and sharply engaged the defenders, who speedily gave way under this opportune diversion and the final rush of the surviving grenadiers. Even now, though the bridge was won, all was not over. The Austrian reserves marched up to support their two first lines; and a charge of their horsemen nearly drove the French back to the bridge. Not until the divisions of Masséna and Cervoni passed over the bridge, while that of Augereau came up from the crossing at Borghetto, did the swaying *mêlée* at last roll eastwards. Overborne by numbers, outflanked, and at last assailed by several squadrons of French *chasseurs*, the Imperialists took to flight; yet still their hussars and the fine Neapolitan horse many a time rallied and checked the pursuit, so that their total losses did not exceed 153 killed, 182 wounded, 1700 prisoners, and 15 cannon. The French lost no guns and prisoners, but had more than 500 killed and wounded. On the next day Bonaparte captured Pizzighettone; Cremona also opened its gates; but with wise restraint he forebore to pursue Beaulieu towards Mantua until the news of the ratification of peace with Sardinia should relieve him of all fear for his communications. For the present, he was satisfied with holding the line of the Adda.

In truth, the importance of the battle of Lodi is personal and political rather than strategic. For the reason just stated it exercised no direct influence on the campaign. Not until May 22, after hearing of the signature of the treaty of peace with Sardinia, did Bonaparte take the final steps for the march on Mantua, which was to prelude the intended invasion of Tyrol and the junction with the French Army of

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the Rhine. An examination of his correspondence seems to show that one of his chief motives in fighting the battle of Lodi was to arouse both in the army and in France such a storm of enthusiasm on his behalf as must overbear the opposition which he now encountered from the Directory. His relations with that body were sharply strained from the moment when they heard of his disobedience in granting an armistice to the Court of Turin — a question of high policy which they expressly reserved to their Commissioner, Salicetti, or, preferably, to themselves alone. The half-ironical tone of the young commander's excuses for his disobedience, which, in truth, were unanswerably cogent, cut them to the quick; and, alarmed at the pretensions of this masterful genius and their own helplessness, they sent off a courier from Paris four days before the battle of Lodi, with a most important despatch signed by Carnot himself. After frigidly congratulating Bonaparte on his first successes, it commended him for consulting Salicetti as to the armistice, and warned him against carrying out the plan, sketched in his (Bonaparte's) letter of April 28 from Cherasco, of invading Tyrol and joining the Army of the Rhine in Bavaria. "The imperious necessity of ending the war in the present campaign," wrote Carnot, "forbade so ambitious a scheme, which might end in great reverses; he must therefore drive the Austrians as far as the Tyrolean gorges and then turn against Tuscany and Rome, so as to chase from central Italy, and finally from Corsica, the perfidious English, so long masters of the Mediterranean." To this end the Directors resolved to divide the commands in Italy: Bonaparte was to undertake the southern expedition, Kellermann meanwhile holding the Milanese and subjecting it to heavy contributions until it could be bartered away in the negotiations for a general continental peace.

Bonaparte received this disagreeable, but not unexpected, news on May 13 or 14 at Lodi; and his concern was doubtless increased by his having sinned a second time in granting an armistice to the Duke of Parma for a heavy ransom (May 9). Nevertheless he took a lofty tone. He assured the Directors that Beaulieu still had a large army and would soon receive 10,000 fresh troops; the expedition to Leghorn and Rome was a small affair, but there must be unity in the operations if Italy was to be won: "Everyone has his own way of making war. General Kellermann has more experience and will do better than I; but together we shall do very badly." The argument was again unanswerable, as Carnot must have known; but it gained redoubled force from the mighty wave of enthusiasm that was then rolling over Paris at the news that Bonaparte's men had seized the bridge of Lodi from Beaulieu's whole army—a misstatement which the young leader carefully disseminated in his bulletin, though he must have known its falsity. A few days later came the further news that the Republicans had entered Milan in triumph amidst the boundless rejoicings of the liberated people,

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and that the Austrian garrison was besieged in the citadel. As a result of this bewildering series of triumphs, the civilian rulers of France gave way before the rapidly rising force of militarism, and nothing more was heard of their proposal to divide the Italian command.

Bonaparte's belief in the strength of his position further led him to grant, on his own responsibility, an armistice to the Duke of Modena, on condition that he promptly paid 750,000 francs, and surrendered valuable stores, besides twenty pictures that were to be selected by French commissioners from his galleries. In carrying out the Directors' bidding to press heavily on the Milanese, Bonaparte was careful to send to Paris thirty-two of the finest paintings of Milan and Parma, including several Correggios. Not that he himself cared much for art, for to the end of his life he judged a picture solely by its accuracy; but his conduct in this respect offers a curious proof of the rigidly mathematical cast of his mind, which thought little of *chefs d'œuvre* in themselves, but correctly calculated the political prestige that would accrue to the man who showered them on the galleries and museums of France. He was right; the spoils of the art treasures of Milan, Venice, Florence, and Rome were to assure his general popularity at Paris, just as the sums which he extorted from Italian potentates helped to stop the mouths of the Directors. Before long he ventured to address these last with ironical familiarity, as appears in his letter of June 1, announcing a present of 100 horses to them: "One hundred carriage-horses set out from Milan to-morrow, the finest that could be found in Lombardy; they will replace the mediocre horses that draw your carriages." The facilities for plunder tacitly granted by the young commander also began to sap Republican feelings in the Army of Italy; and by the side of love of *la patrie* there grew up that passionate devotion to a chief which is often fatal to liberty. The sequel was to justify the sage remark of Montesquieu that it was contrary to reason for a democratic Republic to conquer towns which could not enter into the sphere of its democracy; and that its own liberty ran great risks owing to the large powers granted to the officers sent into the conquered Provinces.

The three days of rejoicings kept by the people of Milan on the entry of the French troops gave place to a time, first of suspense, and finally of resentment, when it was found that little, except the planting of trees, was done in the cause of liberty, while the burden of exactions was crushingly heavy. At Milan there was a serious riot; and at Pavia the townsfolk and peasants overpowered the small French garrison. Bonaparte speedily returned, ordered the municipals to be shot, and sent 200 hostages to France (May 26). Having, by these stern measures, cowed the populace, and having arranged for the provisional government of the Milanese, he for the second time set out for Mantua. On May 22 he had received the longed-for news of the ratification of the peace with Sardinia; and, assured as to his communications, he now

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entered the territory of Venice, whose neutrality was thenceforth violated by both sides. Bonaparte, through his then trusted agent, Adjutant-General Landrieux, cajoled two Venetian officers into signing a secret treaty (May 27), whereby the French were allowed to pursue the Austrians through the Venetian territory or besiege them in Venetian fortresses, paying 3,000,000 francs at the close of the war for the damage thus caused. The Venetian government was weak enough to acquiesce in this guileful compact.

Making skilful demonstrations against Tyrol on the north of Lake Garda so as to distract Beaulieu's attention, Bonaparte now launched a force of 22,000 men at about half that number of the Austrians defending the line of the upper Mincio near Valeggio, and on successive days drove them pell-mell northward up the valley of the Adige almost as far as Roveredo. There, amidst the Tyrolese Alps, Beaulieu rested his troops, while the French began the siege of Mantua. The British officer, Colonel Graham, then at the Austrian headquarters, reported that discontent was loudly expressed: "Many of the officers comfort themselves with thinking that defeat must force peace, and others express themselves in terms of despair." It is therefore not surprising that Beaulieu was relieved of the command for which his age, his broken health, and his despondency obviously unfitted him. He had committed nearly every possible fault in the past campaign. Widely sundering his forces at the outset, he had seen his connexion with the Sardinians severed in the first two days; the sluggishness of Argenteau led to the widening of that fatal gap; and, during the critical days when an armistice was discussed at Cherasco, Beaulieu made only the tamest of efforts to help his hard-pressed allies. Outwitted by Bonaparte on the banks of the Po, he could still have made a good stand at the Adda if he had massed his men either at Pizzighettone or at Lodi. Instead of this he let his columns remain scattered during retreat; and the French were held at bay at Lodi for a few hours only by the steady courage of a single Austrian division. Finally, the feints which Bonaparte made at various points on the Mincio and towards the north of Lake Garda led this hapless commander to spread out his line until its attenuated centre was easily pierced. In truth, his one achievement was that he garrisoned and victualled Mantua against a long siege.

In these circumstances the Court of Vienna devolved the command on another septuagenarian, Marshal Wurmser. His personality inspired neither the officers nor Colonel Graham with hope. "The zeal of this good old man," wrote Graham, "is not enough, and there is nothing else." Nevertheless, while fortune seemed to have showered all her favours on Bonaparte, she withheld one needful boon. Though the armistice on the Rhine should have ended on June 1, yet the two French armies in that quarter made none of those decisive movements which his eager brain — even so far back as in his plan of May, 1794 — had always

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pictured as helping to batter down the Austrian defence. After Lodi he wrote to Carnot: "It is possible that I may soon attack Mantua. If I carry that fortress, nothing hinders my penetrating into Bavaria: in two *décades* I can be in the heart of Germany. Could you not combine my movements with the operations of these two armies [on the Rhine]? I imagine that they are now fighting on the Rhine; if the armistice continued, the Army of Italy would be crushed." This last fear now seemed about to be realised; and, whatever was the real reason for the inaction on the Rhine, Bonaparte certainly ascribed it to the malice which the Directors entertained against him. Mantua also was too strongly held to be carried by storm and was destined for some seven months to afford a memorable proof of the power of a well-garrisoned stronghold to "contain" an enemy's army if it is of no great size. Nay, it seemed likely that the French might be driven under the walls of Mantua by the irruption of a relieving force. Austria in Tyrol now enjoyed that advantage of a central position between the two great fields of war which, on a smaller scale, Bonaparte had seized and held with so masterful a grip between the Austro-Sardinian forces in April. She could therefore speedily throw her weight on either side, and she prepared to throw it against Bonaparte, by detaching some 25,000 men from her Rhenish army and quietly massing them in Tyrol.

While Wurmser was organising this force, his young opponent pressed on the siege of Mantua and strengthened his position on the excellent line of defence formed by the Adige from the plateau of Rivoli on the north to the cities of Verona and Legnago. The long-promised reinforcement from Kellermann's Army of the Alps arrived in the middle of June; and Bonaparte, hearing that Wurmser could make no serious move before the second week of July, employed the intervening time in chastising the bandits of the Apennines and in making a dash southwards so as to chase the English from Leghorn and overawe the Pope and the King of Naples. His success was complete; he confiscated a great store of British merchandise at the Tuscan port, and sent off a body of his compatriots to rouse Corsica against George III. The King of Naples promptly signed an armistice as soon as the French menaced his States; and, when the Republicans overran the "Legations" and pushed on to Pistoia, the Pope nervously sued for a truce, which was granted on condition that he paid a sum of 21,000,000 francs, in specie or in kind, besides surrendering 500 manuscripts and 100 pictures or busts at the choice of French commissioners (June 23). Among the busts those of Junius and Marcus Brutus were expressly named. The French were also to garrison the citadel of Ancona and to hold the Legations of Bologna and Ferrara, having the right to levy contributions there: these amounted to 13,000,000 francs. The French also captured in the Legations 200 bronze cannon and many thousands of muskets. Elsewhere exactions and spoils were gathered in with the same assiduity; and Salicetti

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estimated in his report sent to the Directory and dated 10 Thermidor (July 28) that contributions of war to the amount of 61,805,000 francs in money or in kind had been levied in Italy. Events thus showed the correctness of Nelson's prophecy six months earlier as to the results of an invasion of the peninsula by the French. "Holland and Flanders, with their own country, they have entirely stripped; Italy is the gold-mine, and, if once entered, is without the means of resistance."

At this time the Austrian garrison holding the citadel of Milan surrendered to General Despinoy. Bonaparte thus had the satisfaction of seeing his communications with France completely secured, while the rulers of Italy were constrained to supply his troops with the sinews of war. Early in July he was able to announce to the Directors the capture of 697 cannon in the course of the campaign: as for the pictures and statues, they were so numerous as to cause him great embarrassment with regard to means of transport to Paris. All these prodigious gains were now at stake. Moreau's crossing of the Rhine late in June was too late to distract the Austrian plans. The war-cloud long gathering in the Alps was now drifting southwards.

On July 29 the Imperialists attacked Masséna's division at La Corona, to the north of Rivoli, and drove it back in great disorder; others pressed on Despinoy and Augereau lower down the Adige, while a force of 17,000 men under Quosdanovich wound round to the west of Lake Garda with the aim of cutting Bonaparte's communications at Brescia on the high road to France. Wurmser, with 24,000 men, marched down the right bank of the Adige, compelling the French to give up that important defensive line; while Quosdanovich worsted Sauret's division to the north of Lonato and seized Brescia with its magazines and numbers of the French wounded. After hearing these tidings, Bonaparte on July 30 withdrew Masséna and Augereau behind the banks of the Molinella and Mincio in the hope of still covering the siege of Mantua, threw back a further force to repel Quosdanovich, and warned Sérurier to prepare to send off the siege artillery from before Mantua to the river Po if need should arise. On the 30th, when the Austrian attack developed with full vigour on the Mincio, as well as on the side of Brescia, the commander-in-chief rode to the central position of Roverbella and ordered Sérurier to raise the siege of Mantua secretly by night and throw into the Mincio or the marshes the cannon and stores that he could not carry away. On July 31, then, the French gave up the lines of the Mincio and Molinella so as to concentrate near Castiglione and Montechiaro. Augereau avers that his commander, on arriving at this latter place, showed extreme nervousness and hesitation. In fact the position was critical, especially as the numbers and exact positions of the enemy were little known; but Bonaparte's hold on the principles of strategy — the result of long study — had led him to choose the only means of safety, namely, an abandonment of all non-essentials, even

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including the siege of Mantua, in order to regain the advantage of a central position between the two divided parts of the hostile array. Acting in unison, they could have crushed him; but while sundered by Lake Garda and the intervening French force they could be beaten in detail — a danger not foreseen by Weyrother and Duka, the designers of this enveloping strategy.

Bonaparte's masterly counter-stroke received unlooked-for help from Wurmser. That veteran, either from exhaustion caused by the heat or from overweening joy at the deliverance of Mantua, remained with some 16,000 men in that fortress and sent at first only a feeble column under Liptay on the track of the French, thereby enabling Bonaparte to throw his weight against the scattered forces of Quosdanovich to the south-west of the lake. Driven by Augereau from Brescia on August 1, they were worsted in three engagements on the next two days (known collectively as the battle of Lonato) and fell back northwards in confusion. On August 3 Augereau dashed eastwards against Wurmser's vanguard at Castiglione and beat it back, despite the arrival of reinforcements from Mantua. This last news aroused Wurmser from his dream of triumph, and he led a strong force to Solferino in the hope of joining hands with Quosdanovich. Indeed, Graham asserts that the two Austrian generals had formally arranged to give battle to the French on the 7th. However that may be, Bonaparte gave them no respite. On the 4th he ordered Fiorella with 5000 men of Sérurier's division to make a forced march from Marcaria on the south to Medola, so as in due course to crush the left wing of the Imperialists. These were now drawn up, some 25,000 in number, with their right strongly posted on the hilly ground near the height of Solferino, whose tower-crowned slopes were destined once again to witness the retreat of the Austrian double-headed eagle before the tricolour standards of France. Wurmser's desire to feel after the remnants of Quosdanovich's corps, now away to the north, was largely responsible for Austria's overthrow. Stretching out boldly on that side where Bonaparte humoured his wish, he weakened his left flank in the plain. It was a fatal mistake. Fiorella was quickly coming up and charged almost into his headquarters. Beating back this onset, the Marshal sought hastily to re-form his array; but, while engaged in this delicate operation, he was fiercely attacked at the centre and right by Augereau and Masséna. At once his lines wavered and then speedily melted into bands of runaways, whose flight was scarcely stayed by the shelter of the Mincio far in their rear. Thence the Imperialists fell back on La Corona, having lost, in all, some 17,000 men.

Yet Wurmser had not wholly failed; besides revictualling Mantua, he had taken Bonaparte's siege artillery, the want of which was for the future to make the investment of that stronghold a mere wearisome blockade. Of all the mistakes in Bonaparte's early campaigns the most serious, assuredly, was his lack of due preparation against the inroad of

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the Austrians which had been expected for five weeks or more. It is the opinion of the best military writers that, if the Austrians had not weakened their main army by detaching as many as 17,000 men to the west of Lake Garda, but had acted promptly and with solid masses on the Mincio and at Castiglione, the position of Bonaparte must have been desperate; and a disaster would have meant for him irreparable disgrace at the hands of the jealous and resentful Directors. As it was, he was able to send to them a grandiloquent account of his victories, asserting that he had taken from twelve to fifteen thousand prisoners and would march on Vienna so soon as a division of Moreau's army reached Innsbruck.

It seems certain that he meant ultimately to take the road through Bassano and Friuli; but in any case he resolved to move first against the Imperialists about Trent, leaving 6000 men to observe Mantua, and the same number in front of Verona to hold in check Wurmser's main force, cantoned about Roveredo and Bassano.

We may fitly pause here to pass in brief review the mental qualities that led to these astonishing results. From the first, Bonaparte displayed all the qualities that mark a born commander. Long study of the careers of great leaders had given him a grip of the principles of strategy which strengthened his naturally keen perception, and suggested a ready solution of difficulties as they occurred. Hence, except before the first battle of Castiglione, we find in him no trace of nervousness or hesitation such as too often paralyses the action of young generals. Having carefully studied the ground, together with the motives that must influence his opponents' moves, he formed thereon his general plan of campaign, strictly subordinating it, however, to the shifting fortunes of the game. This power of assigning to facts their real importance was his dominant characteristic so long as his mind retained its flexibility; witness his uncommon detachment of mind in holding almost aloof from his first pitched battle at Montenotte, in order to press on the hinder columns into a gap between the Allies. This keenness of insight, that distinguished the essential from the less essential — for the fight itself soon proved to be a foregone conclusion — stamped him at once as a great commander. If, later, his besetting sin, excess of confidence, led him to cling too closely to the siege of Mantua almost under the curl of Wurmser's advancing wave — a mistake which cost him his siege-train — yet it was the miscalculation of a great and masterful nature, whose discernment and energy promptly brought about the triumphant rally at the all-important central position to the west of Castiglione.

In view of this wealth of natural gifts, any enquiry whether Bonaparte owed much to the examples of other commanders who had culled laurels in Northern Italy might seem to be superfluous. Seeing, however, that his indebtedness to the example set by the Marshal de Maillebois in 1745 has been very positively affirmed (from the time of the Marquis Costa de Beauregard, who published his valuable memoirs in 1816, down

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to the present day), we may well pause to examine the extent of this obligation. It may be granted that Bonaparte, so far back as the first plan of campaign, which he drafted at Colmars conjointly with the Commissioners (May, 1794), must have known of the details of Maillebois' campaign, as described by Saint Simon or Pezay; for the other reports of the Commissioners frequently named those works. It has also been lately shown that Bonaparte almost certainly had the latter book in his possession during his campaign of 1796. Parts of the general plan which Pezay attributed to Maillebois may perhaps have influenced Bonaparte, notably those which set forth the need of sundering the allied forces of the Austrians and Sardinians, and compelling the latter to sue for peace. This operation, however, was known to, and approved by, the younger Robespierre, Carnot, the Commissioners, and all men of insight in the years 1793–5; and Bonaparte probably gained it first through Carnot, who enjoined it more than once, and the Commissioners. Furthermore, the student who carefully follows in the *Correspondance* the development of his plan of campaign, from the crude sketch of May, 1794, to the keen strategic conceptions of July, 1795, and January, 1796, will see that there are throughout radical divergences from the plan actually followed by Maillebois. The Marshal began, continued, and ended his campaign in a different manner from that of 1796. Maillebois, with the aid of the Spaniards, was warring against the disunited forces of the Austrians and Piedmontese, then lying in the valleys of the Tanaro and Bormida. Setting out from Mentone with the Franco-Spanish army, he followed the Cornice Road, crossed the mountains by the pass north of Savona, and drove the Piedmontese down the valley of the Bormida past Acqui. Meanwhile, another Spanish army, marching from Modena to Genoa, made use of the Bocchetta pass north of that seaport, and edged back the Austrians towards Alessandria. Near that fortress Maillebois joined the Spanish army that had marched from Genoa, while behind the river Tanaro the Austrians and Piedmontese effected their junction.

Now, it is clear that Bonaparte followed Maillebois' plan only so far as to use the pass north of Savona — a pass which he himself surveyed in 1794. In all other respects his operations far surpassed those of the Marshal, who, operating against divided foes, allowed them to unite; whereas Bonaparte, sundering by a few sharp strokes allies who were already in touch, kept them apart by a trenchant use of the commanding central position which he seized at Altare, and then turned on the Sardinians and compelled them to sue for terms. Whatever Maillebois' plan may have been for bringing about this desirable result, he did not attain it. True, at a later date in his campaign, he separated the opposing forces by throwing a bridge over the Po at Stradella and seizing Pavia; and, in consequence, the Sardinians, with unnecessary weakness, retreated for the defence of their own realm. But, even so, he did not

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follow them and compel them to sue for terms; and the presence of unsubdued enemies in his rear, along with the "eccentric" movements of the Spaniards, marred his whole campaign. If Bonaparte gained a hint here and there from Maillebois' programme, he assuredly learnt far more from the faults in its execution.

Nor can we see in the young commander's final pursuit of Beaulieu to Rivoli, and his holding the line of the Adige in order to cover the siege of Mantua, a mere result of study of the work of Maillebois' engineer, Bourcet, who recommended the occupation of this important strategic line. Here again Costa de Beauregard states that Bonaparte borrowed from Bourcet his idea of holding the Adige and the plateau of Rivoli. Bourcet certainly stated that the plateau of Rivoli was a position that could be guarded by 500 men; but we may point out that the importance of the line of the Adige, with the strong natural position of Rivoli and the fortresses of Verona and Legnago, was obvious to everyone, and that its occupation was enjoined on Bonaparte by Carnot. Further, apart from the paltry stream of the Molinella, there was no other barrier to oppose to a relieving force marching from Tyrol or Friuli. It is of course true that Bonaparte always studied military history with great care; from Guibert he very early borrowed the maxim that he made so peculiarly his own, "War ought to support war"; but, while gleaning much from his predecessors, his mind ever bowed instinctively before the empire of tangible indisputable facts, as he did in the case now before us. To this union of wide-sweeping vision with a passion for the mastery of details he owed his ascendancy over the generality of mankind, in whom width of view is apt to beget dreaminess of aim or diffuseness of action, while absorption in the practical for the most part ends in brainless drudgery.

We now return to the details of the campaign. After making good the defects of his transport and commissariat, Bonaparte was ready for the offensive, and sent the divisions of Augereau, Masséna, and Vaubois, against the Austrians near Roveredo, whence they were dislodged with heavy loss on September 4. In fact, the sudden advance of the French caught them at the beginning of difficult movements of their own. Wurmser had weakened his forces, which did not exceed 41,000 men, by sending a division under Mezaros southwards against Verona so as to relieve Mantua, and was himself heading for the same goal by way of Bassano and the valley of the Brenta; while Davidovich was left with forces insufficient to defend the strong natural position of Lavis, north of Trent. Bonaparte, unaware of Wurmser's purpose, resolved to pursue him down that valley and surround him in the Venetian lowlands. Augereau and Masséna accordingly plunged into the gorges of the upper Brenta, swept before them the first fragments of the hostile array, then the main body itself at Bassano, and, rushing on triumphant into the plain, cut off Wurmser and his Veronese division from all contact with

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the Empire. Even so, the staunch old Marshal was not wholly dazed by the rush of this devastating flood. With a large band of stragglers he struck out westwards, and charged Mezaros to seize Legnago at all costs. Fortune smiled on this desperate enterprise. Bonaparte, fearing lest Wurmser should gain the Papal States, hung less closely on his rear, and the French detachment guarding Legnago weakly gave up that town. There, consequently, Wurmser and Mezaros crossed the Adige, and, overpowering a detachment of the French besiegers of Mantua, gained the shelter of its outworks. In front of St George and La Favorita they sought to hold their ground; but again they were worsted and fell back into the crowded and unhealthy fortress (September 15). Of an army of 41,000 men with which Wurmser began his brief campaign, a mere fragment remained fit for active service. The rest were flying across the Alps, or were in the grip of the young conqueror.

Despite the crushing disasters entailed by the recent ill-considered plans, Francis II determined to relieve Mantua by operations of the same general description. He still had some grounds for hope. In the month of October the Archduke Charles severely defeated the French in Germany, and could therefore throw into Tyrol reinforcements far outnumbering those which Bonaparte could receive. The next effort, in truth, came very near to success. A new commander-in-chief, Alvintzy, was soon at the head of 60,000 troops (though many of these were raw militia), and designed to strike his main blow with 35,000 men through Friuli, while the rest under Davidovich were to descend the valley of the Adige. This division of forces, though ultimately as fatal to success as it had proved to be to Wurmser, much perplexed Bonaparte at the outset. The French were driven from the plateau of Rivoli, and when their main body attacked Alvintzy on the heights of Caldiero, to the east of Verona, they suffered a severe defeat, losing 2000 killed and wounded and 700 prisoners (November 12). Bonaparte retrieved the situation by a daring night march down the right bank of the Adige, which he crossed on pontoons at Ronco, and by taking position amid the marshes of Arcola on Alvintzy's flank. This move offers a good example of Napoleonic strategy, which always aimed at forcing the enemy to fight in a disadvantageous position. Sometimes he threatened a great city that they were guarding; more often he threatened their communications. It was so in this case. At Arcola the fighting on the causeways and dikes would naturally favour the French, who, though slightly inferior in number, excelled the Imperialists in prowess. Perhaps a more skilful and determined commander than Alvintzy would have disregarded this menace, which was more apparent than real, and, while blocking the French for a time amid the swamps, would have strained every nerve to join hands with Davidovich beyond Verona. But, as an Austrian column was already at Arcola, Alvintzy took up the challenge which Bonaparte threw down. In fact, the Imperialists

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were already moving so as to cross the Adige at Zevio, and surround the French near Verona. Three days of desperate fighting ensued on the dikes and at the bridge of Arcola, where at the outset Bonaparte himself nearly lost his life; on the third day, however, the superiority of the Republicans in tenacity and resource finally prevailed. Their flanking movement to the east of Arcola alarmed the defenders, who beat an undignified retreat, and that, too, at the very time when Davidovich was drawing near on the north-west, and when Wurmser sought to break out from Mantua. With the loss of 6100 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners (a total which Bonaparte more than doubled in his bulletin), Alvintzy fell back towards Bassano, while Davidovich barely made his escape into Tyrol.

Austria put forth her last effort to regain Italy early in the year 1797. It was arranged that Alvintzy at the head of 28,000 men should overpower the French at Rivoli, while Provera with 9000 attacked the line of the lower Adige and other demonstrations distracted Bonaparte's attention elsewhere. The student of military history will observe that this plan of enveloping the French at several points resembled in its salient features the other schemes which achieved a temporary and partial success at the risk of almost certain overthrow at the hands of a skilful and determined commander. The sequel was what might have been expected when Bonaparte was concerned. As before, the French were driven from La Corona and fell back on the lower Adige; not until January 13, when full reports came in from different quarters, was their commander convinced that the main attack would be at Rivoli. At once he hurried northwards with 13,000 men to reinforce Joubert's division, now very hard pressed on the plateau of Rivoli. Bonaparte knew the strength of this post, which gave him the advantage of a central station between the two almost parallel valleys of the Adige and of a small tributary; while the Austrians could only attack from those valleys or from the narrow ridge that connects the plateau with the overhanging heights of Monte Baldo. Their onsets were therefore widely spread out and further suffered from the impossibility of bringing their artillery up from the valley of the Adige by the long, winding slopes of the one practicable road that led to the summit of the plateau. These defects of their position, together with their ill-concerted attacks in six separate columns, gave the victory to Bonaparte. The westernmost column, which worked round the French rear, was finally itself surrounded and had to ground arms. Having utterly shattered Alvintzy's main force, the young commander flew southwards and captured nearly the whole of Provera's corps near Mantua. The cycle of triumphs was completed by the surrender of that fortress on February 2, with 18,000 men, 315 cannon, and an immense quantity of munitions of war.

The French conquest of Italy was virtually complete when Wurmser hoisted the white flag at Mantua. It now only remained to chastise the

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Pope for the hostility that he had lately manifested and to wrest from Austria a final acknowledgment of French supremacy in the peninsula. Both of these concluding efforts were crowned with startlingly easy and complete success. The papal troops fled at the sight of the French bayonets, and Pius VI was fain to sign the terms of peace agreed on at Tolentino (February 19); whereby he bound himself to pay 30,000,000 francs before the end of April, and to hand over the sum of 300,000,000 francs to the French government as atonement for the murder of Basseville, a secretary of the French Legation, by the Roman populace in 1793. Bonaparte also wrote on that same day that the *savants* were gathering in a rich harvest at Ravenna, Rimini, Pesaro, Ancona, Perugia, and Loretto — at the last of which they despoiled the famous shrine — and that these gains, together with those from Rome, would yield up to France "almost every fine thing in Italy, except a few objects at Turin and Naples." He also sent to the Directors the Madonna and relics of Loretto, with the disappointing announcement, "The Madonna is of wood" — a phrase which throws some light on his convictions respecting religion. And yet there are not wanting signs in his words and actions that he sought to spare the Holy See from the full blast of revolutionary wrath and to prepare the way for that future good understanding which took form in the Concordat of 1801–2.

Having enriched French coffers and museums from Guelfic sources, Bonaparte now proceeded to thrust the *Tedeschi* from the utmost bounds of the peninsula. Alvintzy's successor, Archduke Charles, had in the meantime brought to their forces the encouragement of his great influence and of an untarnished military fame; there was also the hope of reinforcements coming from the armies in Germany, if the French remained inactive in that quarter. This latter circumstance caused Bonaparte much uneasiness, as his correspondence shows; but he decided to attack Austria through Friuli, relying on the valour of his troops and on the formal promise of the Directors, that both the French armies on the Rhine would press the Emperor hard in Germany. His hope of indirect help from Moreau and Hoche was to be wholly falsified, for neither of them was in a position to make any forward move; but the fighting powers of the Army of Italy were to prove an unfailing resource. Its numbers also were now raised to more than 70,000 men by reinforcements, which included a fine division from the Army of the Rhine, under the command of a fiery young Gascon, Bernadotte. As yet Archduke Charles had received no succour from that quarter, and he was further burdened by the duty of covering the seaport of Trieste, which the War Council strictly enjoined. Worst of all, however, was the despair that settled on the Imperialists when it was seen that even his influence failed to extirpate the canker of favouritism. "The discontent remains" (wrote Graham on March 14) "which makes many officers be absent under pretence of sickness; . . . the difference of

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the number of French and Austrian officers in proportion to the men is of itself sufficient to account for all the defeats of the latter in such a country as this; this is a daily subject of conversation here with those most in the Archduke's confidence, but they look on the evil as irremediable on account of the obstinacy with which the old system is adhered to at Vienna."

It is needless to relate fully the details of a campaign in which Court favourites and a too pliable ruler doomed thousands of brave men to butchery and the Empire to merited disgrace. Overpowered by numbers, and still more hopelessly outmatched in fighting efficiency, the Imperialists fell back in rapid succession from the banks of the Piave, Tagliamento, and Isonzo (March 10–19), losing heavily in prisoners and deserters. The Archduke retired towards Laybach; but, on hearing that Masséna on the extreme left of the French was about to seize the Col di Tarvis, the chief pass of the Carnic Alps, he hurried reinforcements to that important point, the defence of which had been strangely neglected. The mistake was irreparable. An Austrian force, separated from the main command, was cut off by the divisions of Masséna and Guieu; and the French veterans beat back every effort of the Archduke to recover the snowy heights above Tarvis. After losing some 20,000 men in the first two weeks of the campaign, Charles hurriedly retreated through Klagenfurt, where Bonaparte established his headquarters on March 30. Near that city the French commander drew together the divisions of Masséna, Guieu, Chabot, and Bernadotte; he also directed Joubert, whose powerful corps in Tyrol had driven the foe over the Brenner Pass, to wheel to the east through the Pusterthal and assure the communications of the main army. Nervous, however, at hearing of no movement of the French on the Rhine, he sent on March 31 a "philosophic" letter to the Archduke in which he adjured him to stop the effusion of blood and grant an armistice. To the Directors he justified his conduct on the ground that the terms he would secretly sign were far more favourable than those sent by General Clarke, whom they had attached to him as diplomatic adviser and controller. Receiving no satisfactory reply from Charles, he pushed on triumphantly as far as Judenburg, where at midnight of April 7–8 the Archduke agreed to a truce up to April 13. On that day General Merveldt brought to the French headquarters at Leoben proposals for the prolongation of the armistice, with a view to the signature of preliminaries of peace. Three French projects were drawn up to this end; and it is noteworthy that the first and third of these named, or clearly implied, the partition of Venetia.

The preliminaries of peace were signed on April 18 near Leoben by Merveldt and the Marquis di Gallo for Austria, and by Bonaparte on behalf of France. Clarke was at this time absent in Italy; and the urgency of the occasion could reasonably be alleged by the young commander for this crowning irregularity. The Emperor Francis now

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gave up all claims to his Belgic Provinces and "recognised the limits of France as decreed by the laws of the French Republic." For this loss he was to receive, on the signature of the definitive treaty, an "equitable indemnity." The French further covenanted to restore the other Habsburg lands occupied by them and to retire to Italy. Peace was to be declared between France and the Empire, details being left for settlement in a Congress. The term "equitable indemnity" was defined in secret articles, which provided that, while the Emperor renounced all claims on his Italian lands to the west of the river Oglio (that is, the Milanese) he was to acquire all the mainland territories of Venice east of that river, inclusive of Dalmatia and the Italian part of Istria. To Venice were allotted the three Legations of Romagna, Ferrara, and Bologna, which had recently been incorporated as the Cispadane Republic under the protection of France. The Duke of Modena, lately dispossessed of his duchy, was to have a suitable indemnity in Germany. To this last provision only did Thugut offer any strong opposition. Nothing was said either in the published or the secret articles respecting the Ionian Isles of Venice or the Rhine boundary.

The motives which led to the signature of the preliminaries were complex. On his side Bonaparte was apprehensive for his communications. Joubert's march, to safeguard his rear, had been hindered by a widespread rising of the Tyrolese; and the Venetians had risen against the French at Verona and elsewhere — events that will claim our attention presently. He was also fearful that the inaction of the French on the Rhine would leave Austria free to overwhelm him now that he had ventured into the heart of her dominions. Had he known the real state of things — that Hoche was about to cross the Rhine on the very day after the preliminaries were signed, and that Moreau was circumspectly preparing for the same step — the Habsburg Power would certainly not have come off so easily. But he did not hear these long-wished-for tidings until his return to Italy; and his precarious position at Leoben warranted his naming the signature of those terms *une opération militaire.*

The Court of Vienna, on the other hand, had many reasons for accepting the present conditions. Austria was at the end of her resources, and the clamour for peace was becoming serious. The family ties that bound the Emperor Francis to the Court of Naples (still trembling for fear of France) urged him speedily to make peace. Furthermore, though the Austrian Chancellor, Baron Thugut, had clung to the English alliance, he was deeply annoyed by the withdrawal of our fleet from the Mediterranean in the previous November, and even asserted that this was the chief cause of the Austrian reverses in Italy. In the same month, moreover, the Czarina Catharine II had died; and her successor, Paul I, showed no sign of carrying out her wish of entering the Coalition against France. Thus the general situation of affairs was unpromising; though the circumstances of the moment favoured the

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Viennese government in so far that it knew of the actual situation of the Rhenish armies, which was unknown to Bonaparte. In such a case prudence prescribed the acceptance of the terms now offered. They were not unfavourable; Venetia had long been a coveted prize; Mantua was still to be the bulwark of Habsburg power beyond the Alps.

In truth, neither side took these preliminaries seriously. The Austrian Court was as well aware as Bonaparte himself that he had no authority for signing any such compact. "If you sincerely wish for peace," Bonaparte wrote to the Directory on April 22, "then the preliminaries, which will be susceptible of all the changes that we desire, will promptly bring about a solid pacification, such that it alone will gain us the Rhine boundary, or nearly so. In this case, perhaps, it would be well to declare war against Venice; that would enable the Emperor to enter into possession of her mainland, and us to unite Bologna, Ferrara, and Romagna to the Milanese Republic." In other words, peace was to be assured by the virtual extinction of the neutral Venetian State. This was definitely arranged between Bonaparte and Merveldt; it was the corner-stone of the compact of Leoben.

He had already prepared the Directors for some such design. On April 5 (that is, before he heard of the outbreak at Verona, soon to be described) he warned them that the democratic ferment at Brescia and Bergamo, where the authority of the Doge had been cast down, might lead to the overthrow of the Venetian government; and there are grounds for believing that he had a hand in secretly encouraging the risings at those towns. His conduct towards Venice had throughout been threateningly ambiguous, in accordance with the tone of his letter of June 7, 1796, to the Directory: "If your plan is to extract five or six million francs from Venice, I have expressly prepared for you this sort of rupture with her. . . . If you have more pronounced intentions, I think you ought to keep up this subject of quarrel, instruct me as to your wishes, and await the favourable moment, which I will seize according to circumstances; for we must not have everybody on our hands at once." The Directory gave him a free hand in exploiting the wealth of Venice, and seemingly cared little what was her doom. The time for action was now at hand and brought with it an excuse for pressing hard on that hapless State. The Venetians on the mainland had long been restless under the load of exactions foisted upon them as the sequel to the one-sided agreement into which Bonaparte and Landrieux had cajoled the government at the close of May, 1796. Thus, when their spoilers seemed to be engulfed amid the Austrian Alps, the worst sufferers, the men of Verona, rose on Easter Monday (April 17) with a wild impulse of revenge and massacred numbers of Frenchmen, both soldiers and civilians, and even the wounded left behind in their city. For three days the burghers and armed peasants struggled on against the French garrison in the castles, whose cannon dealt havoc throughout the city;

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but then came news of the Peace of Leoben, which put an end to all hopes of Austrian aid.

In the case of this outbreak, known as the *Pâques véronaises*, as also of the democratic risings at Brescia and Bergamo, there are grounds for believing that they were due in the first instance to agents in the pay of the French; though events such as the perfidious entry of their troops into the Venetian fortress of Crema, and their many outrages on the townsfolk and peasantry of Venetia, would in themselves have naturally led to a bloody retaliation. The democrats of Brescia and Bergamo, after declaring their independence of Venice, elected as their commander-in-chief the French Adjutant-general, Landrieux, who had had a hand in these events. This same intriguer, chief of the staff of Kilmaine's division holding Venetia and Lombardy, had tortuous dealings with the wire-pullers of the local Jacobin clubs, especially with a Milanese democrat named Salvadori. This man had the effrontery to issue a Venetian proclamation, purporting to come from the *provedditore*, Battaglia, which invited the people of the mainland to rise against the French. This impudent forgery, dated March 20, but put forth on April 5, was speedily disavowed by Battaglia and the Venetian Senate; but it certainly helped on the collision at Verona. The connexion of Bonaparte with Landrieux has been denied on the ground that he would not have provoked a rising during the campaign among the Noric Alps, and also because he subsequently disgraced him. These arguments, however, count for little in the case of a man who was always unscrupulous in his use and rejection of tools. Furthermore, the following phrase, which he used respecting Venice in his letter of March 24, 1797, to the Directory, shows that he already harboured some extensive design against her. "The great point in all this is to gain time." On April 9, that is after signing the truce at Judenburg with the Archduke Charles, he took the highly provocative step of sending Junot to Venice charged with an insolent letter to the Doge, which he was forthwith to read aloud to the Grand Council of the nobles. In it the commander-in-chief accused that body of the blackest perfidy in arming peasants and causing them to massacre "several hundreds" of his soldiers. The event which called forth this tirade was the following. The discreditable means whereby the French gained possession of Crema from its Venetian garrison had so exasperated all the neighbouring districts, that the sturdy mountaineers dwelling on the west of Lake Garda swooped down on a detachment of Lombards, Poles, and French at Salo, and after a sharp fight captured some 300 of them. There was nothing to show the complicity of the timid Venetian oligarchy in this affair; but Kilmaine's report of it enabled Bonaparte to ply the Signoria with the missive described above. His satisfaction with the situation finds expression in his letter of April 9 to Kilmaine. "If the Venetian affair is well conducted, as all that you do is, those fellows will soon repent their perfidy. The govern-

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ment of Venice, shut up in its little isle, would not, you may be sure, be of long duration." Once again that formerly proud aristocracy quailed before his threats; but the people of the outlying towns, notably Verona, quivered with anger at this further insult inflicted by Junot, which was doubtless the final cause of the fierce outbreak of Easter Monday. That Bonaparte expected something of the sort may be inferred from his almost complete silence respecting this affair, a silence that contrasts strangely with the tone of righteous anger which he was now to assume concerning another collision far less important than that of Verona.

This last collision took place in the harbour of Venice. A French gunboat, *Le Libérateur de l'Italie*, persisted in entering the Lido, the harbour of Venice, whence foreign war-ships were now excluded; on refusing to withdraw she was fired on by the forts, with the result that four men were killed, including the captain Laugier, and the vessel herself was captured (April 21). In vain did the Senate seek to appease Bonaparte's wrath by sending a deputation to him at Grätz to explain that this unfortunate affair was due to Laugier's infraction of Venetian law. In vain did they offer reparation. He would none of it. "I will be a second Attila to Venice," he exclaimed. He refused to receive the envoys sent by the Senate; and to the Directory he wrote (April 30) that this last incident was "the most atrocious affair of the century."

Nevertheless he prepared to act with caution. The Queen of the Adriatic could not easily be seized without a fleet; and on the sea France was nearly helpless. He therefore prepared to drop the dissolving acid of democracy on the already crumbling fabric of the Venetian State. Its working was swift and sure. Through the medium of Villetard, the secretary of the French Embassy in Venice, who had now taken the place of the ambassador, the Senators were cajoled into the belief that the adoption of a constitution like that of France was their only means of safety, and that in that case Austria would find her compensation in Bavaria. Clutching at this hope, and nervous at the sound of the French cannon now thundering at Mestre, the Great Council of the nobles sat in state to decide on the fate of the Republic. The aged Doge Manin and 537 members were present, and of these only 12 had the courage to vote against the adoption of the provisional government proposed by the French (May 1). To complete their terror, Bonaparte launched at them a manifesto which amounted to a declaration of war against Venice (May 2), but consented to receive a deputation that humbly sought his presence at Milan. To these trembling envoys he accorded a truce; thereupon Villetard, unaware of the final act of treachery which the general had in view, cast about to secure the dismissal of the Slavonian troops, and the erection of a democratic municipality which should serve to invite the French to enter the city.

Once more the Venetians were ensnared; from among the democratic minority Villetard picked out suitable municipals; and on May 12, after

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the trusty Slavonian troops had been sent away, the Great Council ordained by 512 voices to 20 that the public authority should devolve on the newly-elected body. On the morrow, in pursuance of the wishes of the new democratic government, Venetian vessels brought the French to the forts of the island city; and on the 16th the new municipals, decked with Italian tricolour scarves of office, were escorted in triumph by French military bands around the square of St Mark amidst the applause of scanty groups of democrats, whose childish glee blinded them to the signs of coming disaster. Their underlings then proceeded to plant trees of liberty and to burn the insignia of the Doge and the Golden Book of the Republic, symbols of well-nigh 500 years of civic life — a life in the main glorious and beneficent, but now to be cut short by the doom which awaits enervating luxury and cowardly inaction.

In reviewing the fall of Venice, one cannot avoid the reflexion that the end ought to have come, and might readily have come, in far other guise. Had her rulers, even one month earlier, taken the forged manifesto at its word; had they, while denouncing its treachery, armed the many thousand peasants of the Bergamesque and Veronese who loved their Republic as much as they longed for revenge on the French; had they boldly sided with Austria, besought the aid of the Tyrolese and the Croats, and launched their devoted Slavonian troops on Bonaparte's rear, they might have cut him off amidst the Styrian Alps and reduced him to the sorest straits. Had the attempt failed, the Queen of the Adriatic would have fallen; but at least she would have won in her dying agony something of that halo of glory with which a nobler Manin was to crown her half a century later, when the breath of nationality roused her to a new life and taught her sons how to die for Italy.

The doom of her ancient rival was tamer, more protracted, and less noteworthy. During four years Genoa had dragged on a miserable existence, seeking to remain neutral in the strife between the powerful nations warring at her gates, and receiving from both sides provocations and insults. Bonaparte's Corsican patriotism had so far waned as to leave behind little of the hatred that he once felt for the former mistress of his island; and during his Italian campaign his feeling towards her was one of contempt for her weakness, modified by an opportunist resolve to drain away her wealth. By a skilful mingling of military threats and financial demands he succeeded in equipping his army from Genoese sources in some of the crises in the early part of the campaign. As his position in Italy improved, his tone hardened; on July 6, 1796, he charged Faypoult, the French envoy at Genoa, to support the democrats in that city by all possible means, and to procure the banishment of the chief aristocratic families attached to the Austrian cause. Feuds thenceforth arose between the two factions in Genoa; the news of the fall of the Venetian oligarchy fanned these passions into a flame, and after terrible street fighting the democrats were routed (May 23). One or two

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French subjects having been slain, Bonaparte was able to carry matters with a high hand. From the castle of Mombello near Milan, where he was living in almost royal pomp, he sent a threatening and insulting letter to the Doge and Senate, which his aide-de-camp, Lavalette, read forth with military *hauteur*. "We will fight," cried some of the Senators; but the majority saw the hopelessness of resisting the two French divisions now on the march, and soon agreed to send envoys to treat with the master of Italy. Thus, on June 6, a provisional treaty was signed at Mombello, which changed the form of the Genoese government. The rule of the nobles gave place to a democracy of a moderate type, the legislative power being entrusted to two popularly elected chambers, while the executive functions were wielded by a Doge and twelve Senators. This compromise between the forms of the old Genoese constitution and those of the French Directory is of some significance, as marking a transition in Bonaparte's beliefs from Jacobinism towards autocracy. He further intervened to check the extravagances of the now victorious democrats, and, when disorders arose, sternly repressed them by armed force; the numbers of the Genoese Directory and Councils were thereafter lessened, and the Republic took the name Ligurian. But, whatever the changes in form and title, French control was assured; and Bonaparte wrote (November 12, 1797) that, as the constitution would probably not suit Genoa, there would be little difficulty in bringing that people to its knees with a prayer that they might become French citizens.

On a higher plane is Bonaparte's work in the making and organisation of the first democratic Republic of modern Italy. For some time after his first entry into Milan (May 15, 1796) he was unable to do more then organise in one or two Lombard cities consultative committees and National Guards, seeing that the Directors specifically bade him refrain from committing France to any permanent responsibility in a Province, which they prized solely for its immediate value in plunder and for its prospective value as an object of barter in the coming bargain with Austria. Their instructions with respect to Modena, however, were entirely vague; thus, when the men of Reggio and Modena rose in revolt, overthrew the ducal rule, and appealed to Bonaparte for protection, he gladly accorded it; for this action promised to bring about that permanence of French rule in Italy which was his dearest wish (October 4, 1796). Nor was this all. On the subsequent arrival of a despatch from Paris warning him against any such step, he informed the Directory that he had already recognised the new popular government at Modena, and had also invited deputies from the Legations of Bologna and Ferrara, which had just renounced the papal sway, to join those of Modena. The Congress was duly held; and the new State took the title of the Cispadane Republic (October 16, 1796). In December the Lombard democrats also held a Congress, and, with the General's permission, sent a deputation to that of Reggio. The formation of the Lombard

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Republic was proceeding at the time of the last battles with Austria; and the Milanese patriots asked for some guarantee of their independence.

Bonaparte's conduct in this matter affords a singular proof of his duplicity. In an undated reply (probably of April 12, 1797, from Grätz) he assured them that every French victory was a line of their constitutional charter; but, writing four days later from Leoben, he informed the Directors that, as Austria refused any compensation in Germany, he had offered her "the evacuation of the Milanese and of Lombardy" by the French. This she also refused; thereupon the preliminaries were drawn up, reserving the independence of Lombardy, but secretly awarding the greater part of the Cispadane Republic to Venice. This double-dealing, and the contemptuous phrase in his letter of October 26, 1797, referring to babblers and fools who longed for the universal republic, show that his erection of these Republics was due less to love of liberty and enthusiasm for Italy than to his perception of their value as pawns in the great game which he was about to carry to a second stage. Or, as he frankly said to Melzi at Mombello: "As for your country, Monsieur de Melzi, it possesses still fewer elements of republicanism than France and can be managed more easily than any other . . . we must give way to the fever of the moment. We are going to have one or two Republics here of our own sort. Monge will arrange that for us."

Even so, however, his designs for Northern Italy stood on a far higher plane than the mean and narrow aims which the Directory had at first enjoined; and to his stern but statesmanlike repression of both the extreme parties, clericals and Jacobins, the young Republics owed whatever consisteney they possessed. Four Committees, chosen by him, were at work through the spring and early summer under his direction to draw up the constitution of the Lombard State, which now received the name "Cisalpine Republic." Its inauguration on July 9 was the occasion of a great and joyous civic festival at Milan. The new constitution was largely modelled on that of the French Directory; and, in order to guard against the choice of too reactionary or Jacobinical deputies, the French Republic, through the medium of its general, named the first Directors, representatives, and officials, of the new commonwealth. Despite the former hesitations of Bonaparte, the Cispadanes begged so hard for a union with the Cisalpine Republic, that he yielded to their wishes in this respect (July 15). The Cisalpines also acquired in August the Venetian lands west of the Oglio, and, after the signature of peace with Austria, those between the Oglio and the Adige. The outbreak of disturbances between governors and governed in the Swiss territory of the Valtelline further enabled Bonaparte to intervene in that quarter; and, in defiance of the protests of both classes, he annexed that district to the Cisalpine Republic (November). Thus, the close of the year saw all the lands between Lake Maggiore, the river Adige, and the town of Rimini on the Adriatic, grouped together

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in a compact and wealthy State comprising some three and a half million inhabitants. Progress in truly constitutional government was hardly to be looked for in a polity which owed its mechanism and its very existence to a methodising autocrat; yet, in spite of Napoleon's rigorous control, Italians there began to free themselves from the inertia of ages and to learn the first hard lessons of self-rule.

The extension of the Cisalpine Republic to the banks of the Adige was a result, partly of the skill and forcefulness displayed by Bonaparte in the final negotiations with Austria, and partly of his unscrupulous sale of the city of Venice. It would far exceed the limits of this chapter were we to attempt any survey of the general negotiations with Austria, or to describe the means employed by Bonaparte before and after the *coup d'état* of Fructidor to bend the Directors to his will. Suffice it to say that the support which he gave to the tottering Directory enabled it to crush the constitutional and royalist opposition in France, and empowered him in the last resort to dictate terms to the body which he had so largely helped to preserve. He accordingly disregarded the explicit and repeated orders of these *soi-disant* rulers that neither Venice nor any part of Venetia must be ceded to the Emperor, even if war were to break out again. In truth, he was resolved on the complete extinction of Venetian rule. So far back as May 27, at the very first conference with the Austrian plenipotentiaries with respect to the definitive treaty of peace, he had arranged that the city of Venice should pass to the Emperor; and he justified this extraordinary step by stating to the Directors that this decadent city, with its silly and cowardly populace, was in no way fitted for liberty. France would therefore plunder her arsenal, carry off all the ships and cannon, and keep for herself Corfu.

It is worthy of remark that on the previous day he had written to the new municipality of Venice, expressing his wish to do all in his power to "consolidate your liberty," and his longing to see Italy "free and independent of strangers." The motive of this passing sycophancy is to be found in his need of the help of the municipality for the equipping of a Venetian fleet that was to secure the Ionian Isles — for France. The seizure once effected, his tone hardened; and throughout all the negotiations we may note his fixed resolve to partition the remains of the Venetian State, so that France might gain those important islands. The thoughts which prompted his present course of action are set forth in his letter of September 13 to Talleyrand, now the Minister for Foreign Affairs — a letter which suggestively shows the connexion between his bargaining with Austria and the second great enterprise of his career. "I think that henceforth the chief maxim of the [French] Republic should be never to give up Corfu, Zante, etc. On the contrary we ought to establish ourselves firmly there; we shall find there immense resources for commerce, and they will be of great interest for us in the future movements of Europe. Why should we not take

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possession of the island of Malta?...If it came about that at our peace with England we were obliged to cede the Cape of Good Hope, we ought to take possession of Egypt. The Venetians alone have for several centuries had a certain preponderance there, but very precarious. One could set out from here with 25,000 men, escorted by eight or ten Venetian ships of the line or frigates, and seize it. Egypt does not really belong to the Grand Signior." In this letter, as in the unscrupulous care with which he had compassed the seizure of the Ionian Isles by means of Venetian vessels, we mark what might be termed the passing away from his thoughts of the Italian *motif* and the first suggestions of the incoming of another dominating *motif*, that of the Orient. The transition in the world of fact was to be effected by the wiping out of Venice as an independent State.

The secret articles signed at Leoben left a dim hope that Venice might retain these islands and even win the Legations. But these arrangements were antiquated now that the French held the capital, the fleet, and the Ionian Isles themselves. Venetian independence stood in the way of Bonaparte's new design, that of securing the complete supremacy of France in the Mediterranean as a prelude to a vaste expansion in the Levant. He meant to be heir to the city that once did "hold the golden East in fee." This is the key that unlocks the intricacies of his policy during the months of diplomatic fencing with the Austrian plenipotentiary, Cobenzl, at Udine and Passariano. He was bent on securing peace with Austria and gaining the Ionian Isles; but this last implied the extinction of Venice. He therefore made no opposition to the handing over of that city to Austria, assuring the Directors that only so would the Emperor consent to the extension of France to the Rhine. He judged that this bait, together with the gain of the Adige boundary and the Legations for the Cisalpine State, would serve to satisfy the French people and overbear the opposition of its government. As for the Habsburgs, they offered a stout resistance to the acquisition of the Ionian Isles by France and to that of the Adige boundary by the Cisalpine Republic. They held out in the hope that the internal difficulties of France would clog her diplomacy; but the *coup d'état* of 18 Fructidor, carried out at Paris by Bonaparte's lieutenant, Augereau, drove from office and into exile Carnot and Barthélemy, who had pleaded for moderation both in internal affairs and in the terms of peace, and installed in power Jacobins of an uncompromising type. "In fact (wrote Augereau on 18 Fructidor) my mission is fulfilled and the promises of the Army of Italy have been made good this night....This event is a great step towards peace; it is for you to cover the space that still keeps us from it." Feeling surer of his ground, Bonaparte now pressed Cobenzl hard, and after a last violent scene gained the Ionian Isles for France.

Peace was accordingly signed at the village of Campo Formio, near

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Udine, on October 17. Its terms, public and secret, were as follows. In Italy Austria was to gain Venice and the whole of Venetia as far as the lines of the Adige and the lower Po, together with Dalmatia and Venetian Istria, while France acquired the Ionian Isles. The Emperor renounced all claims to his Netherland Provinces; he further agreed to cede the Breisgau to the dispossessed Duke of Modena, and to summon a Congress at Rastatt for the settlement of German affairs; he also recognised the independence of the Cisalpine Republic with the frontiers described above — save that the Valtelline was annexed a month later. The secret articles stipulated that the Emperor would use his influence at the Congress to procure the extension of the eastern boundary of France to the Rhine, the French government on its side helping him to acquire the archbishopric of Salzburg and a frontier strip of Bavaria. The imperial fiefs enclaved in Genoese territory were allotted to the newly styled Ligurian Republic; and other rights of the Empire in Italy similarly lapsed in favour of the Cisalpine State. No artillery was to be removed by the Austrians from Mainz, or by the French from Venice or the other Venetian fortresses held by them. This epoch-marking treaty was signed for France by Bonaparte alone, Clarke having recently been recalled in disgrace owing to his connexions with Carnot.

The news that their own city was to be handed over to Austria, and that too by the army which had at first boasted of its liberating mission, aroused the men and women of Venice to sobs of anger and wails of despair. In hot haste the former rulers sent off a deputation to proceed secretly to Paris and bribe the Directors — Barras had already been worked on by their ambassador, Querini — so as to annul this treacherous compact. Even this last effort failed. The secret leaked out to the ever watchful Bonaparte, who forthwith sent his aide-de-camp, Duroc, to defeat this forlorn hope of Venetian liberty. The envoys were brought to him at Milan, bore his bitter taunts in silence, and then made an appeal which moved the Frenchmen to tears. Even the hard Corsican was so far touched as to let them go in peace; but he straightway proceeded with the details of the evacuation of the hapless city in favour of the Austrians. Among the instructions which he sent to Villetard, his hitherto unconscious tool in a crime of which he now beheld the consummation, the following order held a foremost place: "We must leave nothing that can be useful to the Emperor and favour the establishment of a navy. Everything useful to the navy must go to France." In defiance, therefore, of Bonaparte's secret compact with the Emperor, cannon, powder, and stores were taken from the Venetian arsenals; and the useless ships, among them the venerable *Bucentaur*, were burnt. As if this were not enough, the masterpieces of Titian and Tintoretto were seized for the glory of France or the profit of plunderers; and the massive bronze horses, successively the spoils of Romans and Venetians, which tradition assigns to the Greek Lysippus,

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were hoisted down from the portals of St Mark and dragged away, thereafter to grace, until the year of Waterloo, the summit of the arch in the Place du Carrousel at Paris. The Austrians entered the city early in 1798; and, when the Doge Manin brought the eleven hundred years of Venetian independence to an ignominious close by taking the oath of allegiance to the hated *Tedeschi*, he fell to the ground senseless with shame and grief.

The last scenes in the revolutionising of Italy by the French were connected with their occupation of Rome and Naples, events which led to the establishment of Republics in those cities; but these further developments will be more fitly treated in connexion with the War of the Second Coalition. The French conquest of Italy was virtually complete when Austria agreed to the terms of the Treaty of Campo Formio; and Bonaparte showed his perception of the fact by leaving Italy in the middle of November in order to catch a glimpse of German affairs at Rastatt, to procure the ratification of the treaty, and thereafter to receive at Paris the homage of an enraptured people.

That homage was well deserved. In many points of view the Italian campaign of 1796–7 must always stand out as a noteworthy landmark. In the annals of warfare it showed an immense advance on the previous strategy of the Revolutionary age, namely, in the swifter and more decisive use of masses of men either in dominant central positions, or against the weak point of an extended line, or against the enemy's communications. In the sphere of French politics it assured the ascendancy of military instincts over the democratic theories of the Revolution. Historians of European development will always point to Bonaparte's early masterpiece as the first important triumph of French revolutionary agencies, if not of purely revolutionary principles, among a great cognate people, and as affording the means of their further extension at a time when it seemed that the fight with Europe must cease, owing to the exhaustion of the resources of France. No less memorable was its influence on Italy. Her patriots agree that, however unworthy were the means employed, the war, with its ensuing civic and political changes — and we may even include among them the despair that settled for eight years on Venice — brought about the decay of the old order of things and the growth of a feeling of nationality which no reaction could stamp out. But, above and beyond these material and local considerations, students who mark the rise and fall of the moral principles that sway the destinies of mankind must brand the closing scene of the war as a crowning act of treachery to the generous though perhaps visionary aims that largely prompted its inception in 1792, and as the starting-point of a series of campaigns prompted by personal ambition and a desire for national aggrandisement.

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CHAPTER XIX

THE EGYPTIAN EXPEDITION

NOTHING is more remarkable in the course of the French Revolution — a story fertile in paradoxes — than the sudden collapse of the attempts of the advanced democrats to make individual pre-eminence thenceforth difficult or impossible. The seeming success of their Procrustean methods during the first seven years of the catastrophic period led all the more surely to a reaction in which one great personality was to overtop the mediocrities installed in office at Paris and sweep away the barriers that fear or jealousy set up. This reaction made great strides during the Italian Campaign; the Egyptian Expedition brought it to the goal. Bonaparte had all along valued his Italian command for the independence which it necessarily implied. As far back as January 19, 1796, he pointed out in writing to the Directors the need of according complete trust to their commander in the peninsula; and the fact that an answer to a despatch sent from Venetia rarely reached him within three weeks was of no small importance in assuring his freedom of action during the final negotiations, which in their turn paved the way for the events now to be described.

After receiving at Rastatt the ratification of the Treaty of Campo Formio by the envoys of the Emperor, Bonaparte returned to the capital to receive the compliments of the Directors, of whose jealousy he was fully aware, and the cheers of a populace, which his patrician instincts scorned. The action of the Directory had already shown their nervous desire to remove him from Paris. On receipt of the news of the conclusion of peace with Austria they appointed him to command the Army of England; and in February, 1798, he made a short tour along the northern coasts, to judge whether an invasion by a flotilla of small vessels seemed practicable. On February 23 he reported in a sense hostile to the enterprise, that the crossing must take seven or eight hours and would be impossible except during the long nights of winter; in any case, it would be a most daring and difficult operation so long as England controlled the sea. Unless an additional sum of 300,000 francs a *décade* were forthcoming for the long and costly preparations, he

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advised that they should be kept up only in appearance, while France bent her energies either to the task of securing the control of the mouths of the Rhine and Elbe (the first suggestion of the scheme later on known as the Continental System) or to that of an expedition to the Levant so as to menace British commerce with the East Indies. This inspection of the northern seaboard was probably a blind to hide from the world his real intent, which for some months had aimed at the last-named alternative.

The Orient always exercised a strange fascination over him, a fact which some have explained by a possible strain of eastern blood in his Corsican ancestry. Certain it is that so far back as August, 1795, he seriously thought of going to Turkey to reorganise the artillery of the Sultan. When the course of the Italian Campaign brought him to Ancona, in February, 1797, he noted the importance of that harbour: "In twenty-four hours one crosses from here to Macedonia." There, also, he seized Russian despatches on their way to the Knights of Malta, relating to the plans of the Czar Paul for gaining control of the island. The incident opened his eyes to the importance of securing Malta. He strongly urged this on the Directory in his letter of May 26; and during the final negotiations with Austria, which largely turned on the acquisition of the Ionian Isles by France, he wrote (September 13) that Malta ought to be seized; for with that post and Corfu the French would be masters of the Mediterranean and could then conquer Egypt. He seriously discussed this last enterprise with the *savant* Monge, whom he summoned to headquarters; and, as Monge had served as Minister of the Navy in 1793, he was able to give information about the plans for seizing Egypt.

The valley of the Nile had long attracted the attention of French statesmen. The first suggestion that France should seize that land emanated, strange to say, from Leibniz in the form of a *mémoire*, of which he personally brought the substance before Louis XIV in 1672. It is doubtful, however, whether Bonaparte knew of this *mémoire* until the year 1803. The first definite plan for the conquest of Egypt was formed by the Duc de Choiseul in the reign of Louis XV; but nothing came of it. The scheme was revived in a *Mémoire sur la Turquie* drawn up in 1781 by Saint-Priest, French Ambassador at Constantinople. The consular and commercial agents of France in the Levant never lost sight of the scheme; one, named Magallon, had long been working in Egypt with this end in view, and sent in a report to this effect in February, 1798. The plan found favour with many of the more ambitious of the Jacobins, who confidently counted on ruining England by attacking her eastern possessions and commerce from that point of vantage. Bonaparte could therefore reckon on solid support for his proposal. He also sent for Poussielgue, secretary of the French Legation at Genoa, who had relatives settled at Malta, and despatched him on a mission

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to Valetta and Levantine ports, ostensibly to open up trade, "but in reality to put the last touch to the design that we have on this island" (letter of November 12, 1797). The envoy succeeded in undermining the discipline of the Knights and the rule of the Order, with results which will presently appear. According to the Director Barras, he and his colleagues were informed by Bonaparte at the time of the conclusion of the Treaty of Campo Formio that he (Bonaparte) could "buy" Malta for 600,000 francs; the Directory approved of the bargain — such is the testimony of Barras. Even if we reject this as an invention, there seems little doubt that the Directory about that time resolved to seize the island.

The Egyptian Expedition was not definitely determined on until the beginning of March, 1798. The consent of the Directors to this ambitious design has often been attributed solely to fear of the general and a desire to remove him and other active and intriguing officers far away from Paris. Doubtless this motive largely influenced their calculations, as it certainly was a governing motive in his own decision; but they also cherished the kindred hopes of founding a colonial empire, and of dealing British commerce a far more serious blow than that dealt by the recent confiscation of all British merchandise found in France and her vassal lands. On the theme of a French colonial empire Talleyrand had eloquently discoursed to the Institute of France on July 3, 1797, shortly before his appointment to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the middle of the month of February following he presented to the Directory a *mémoire* which set forth in detail the advantages of an Egyptian Expedition. As Bonaparte had close relations with the Minister all through the winter of 1797–8, it seems difficult to accept the conjecture of de La Jonquière that the *mémoire* (which he has recently published) was drawn up independently of the general. However this may be, there is no doubt that this document, together with Bonaparte's report of February 23, as to the impossibility of invading England, powerfully contributed to the official decision. It was clinched by the news of the successful occupation of Bern by the French troops — an event which promised the easy revolutionising of Switzerland and the ready extraction of funds from the cantonal treasuries.

Without recourse to outside help no great expedition could have been prepared. The financial position of France had for some months been that of practical bankruptcy. In his letter of September 3, 1797, Bonaparte declared that he had sent in all 50,000,000 francs from Italy to the government at Paris, including a million francs for naval preparations at Toulon, which, he complained, had been diverted to Paris. At the close of that month the Directory liquidated the State debts, two-thirds being written off in a form which speedily proved to be worthless. After the peace with Austria, French armies could no longer levy exactions on Germany, and the financial situation went from bad to worse. The conduct of the French in Switzerland, if not their initial act of intervention,

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has therefore been generally attributed to this pressing financial need, and it is significant that Bonaparte ceaselessly pressed on the Directory the need of revolutionising that land. As will be shown in a later chapter, the opportunity came in the first days of 1798. A large force was sent to revolutionise the Swiss Confederation, and entered Bern (March 5). A central indivisible Republic was set up; Geneva and Mühlhausen were annexed to France; and a great amount of treasure was taken from the people themselves and from the cantonal exchequers; 130 cannon and 60,000 muskets also fell into French hands. Part of these resources went straightway to Toulon, as the letters of Napoleon prove.

The French occupation of Rome will also be described in a later chapter; but we may note here that no small part of the wealth wrung from the papal treasury, the private property of the Pope, and from the citizens, went to further the equipment of Bonaparte's armada. Even so, the lack of money grievously hampered the preparations. Though the naval resources of Venice, Genoa, the new Roman Republic, and Corsica were requisitioned, sound ships were not forthcoming in the number required; and many of the transports proved to be unseaworthy, while all were overcrowded. However, considering the wretched condition of the French navy and the financial embarrassments of the State, the speed of the preparations is very noteworthy as showing the eager activity of Bonaparte.

The aims of the expedition were thus defined in secret decrees drawn up by him, and signed by the Directory on April 12: "The army of the East shall take possession of Egypt; the Commander-in-chief shall chase the English from all their possessions in the East which he can reach, and in particular he shall destroy all their *comptoirs* in the Red Sea. He shall have the Isthmus of Suez cut through; and he shall take all the steps necessary to assure the free and exclusive possession of the Red Sea to the French Republic. He shall ameliorate by all the means in his power the lot of the natives of Egypt. He shall maintain, as far as it depends on him, a good understanding with the Grand Signor and his immediate subjects." He was further charged to take possession of the island of Malta; and the French frigates at Île de France and Réunion were to sail for Suez, there to be placed under his orders.

Bonaparte had recently been elected a member of that famous learned body, "the Institute of France," and quietly made arrangements to take with him a number of learned men with a view to the investigation of the antiquities, arts, and natural resources of Egypt. Considering the extent and variety of these preparations, which included the engagement of Arab interpreters, it reflects discredit on the British government that the destination of this great armada was so long kept secret.

The Toulon fleet set sail on May 19; and, when the contingents from Marseilles, Genoa, Civita Vecchia, and Corsica effected their junction, the armada comprised thirteen ships-of-the-line, fourteen frigates (some

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of them unarmed), a large number of smaller vessels of war, and about 300 transports. Upwards of 35,000 troops were on board, along with 1230 horses. If we include the crews, the commission of *savants* sent to explore the wonders of Egypt, and the attendants, the total number of persons aboard was about 50,000; it has even been placed so high as 54,000. Half of the crews of the transports were aliens; and many of the French sailors and troops were discontented owing to arrears of pay. It is not surprising, then, that Admiral Brueys, the naval commander acting under Bonaparte, had grave fears as to the efficiency of his unwieldy fleet, and trembled when he heard that Nelson was on his track.

The disregard of Britain's naval power shown both by Bonaparte and by the Directory in their oriental schemes strikes us now as fatuous in the extreme. It should be remembered, however, that the alliance concluded between France and Spain in 1796 had led to the removal of the British fleet from the Mediterranean. Further, the French government believed that the expeditionary forces assembled at Brest and other French ports, for the support of the forthcoming Irish rebellion, must detain all the British naval forces on blockade service or in the home waters, while Bonaparte's capture of Malta and Egypt would deprive England of the best naval bases in the central and eastern Mediterranean. The reasoning seemed to be sound, but it was invalidated by the premature explosion of Irish disaffection and by the resolve of the Pitt Ministry (formed on or before April 20, 1798) to send a powerful fleet into the Mediterranean, not primarily for the purpose of thwarting Bonaparte, but (as will be shown below) in order to protect Naples. In brief, the British government was about to act on the Napoleonic plan of defending itself by means of attacking the enemy in an unexpected quarter, namely, Italy. And this bold conduct proved to be the means of safety.

The almost miraculous escape of the French fleet, and the other naval events of the expedition, are detailed below; and we need therefore merely state that part of the armed force was landed at Valetta, and, thanks to the previous use of French gold among the Knights and the present offer of a German principality and 300,000 francs' annuity to the Grand Master, easily brought that impregnable fortress to surrender, the assailants losing only three men killed and five or six wounded. Bonaparte spent a week in Malta, in order to organise the administration of the new colony on a modern basis and to replenish his coffers by requisitions and plunder. Setting sail for the east on June 19, he, a few days later, lifted the veil of secrecy as to his destination by proclaiming that he was about to deal England a terrible blow by seizing Egypt. He bade his men respect the manners and beliefs of the Egyptians and show the same toleration that they had manifested towards "the religion of Moses and of Jesus Christ."

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By signal good fortune the armada just missed Nelson off Crete; but, when nearing the coast of Egypt, the frigate *Junon*, which was sent on ahead to Alexandria for news, brought back the startling intelligence that the English fleet had left only the previous evening. The tidings were at once conveyed to Bonaparte in the flag-ship *L'Orient*; and the antiquary, Denon, who watched him at this critical moment, declared that his countenance showed not the slightest change. The position was full of danger: the transports were straggling over many miles of sea, exposed to a northerly gale against a lee shore. Nevertheless, Bonaparte ordered preparations for an immediate disembarkation in the road of Marabout. It was begun with very great difficulty and some loss of life. On the evening of July 1 no guns could be landed; and only about 5000 men of the divisions commanded by Menou, Kléber, and Bon were available for the projected attack on Alexandria.

Nevertheless, encouraged by the dauntless bearing of their commander, who had braved the dangers of the night-landing with his usual stern fortitude, the troops shook off all sense of sickness, weariness, and depression, when shortly before dawn the order came to march into the desert. The pangs of thirst soon succeeded, only to furnish another stimulus—the hope of finding water in the city. Alexandria was weakly held; but soldiers and townsfolk for a time poured a hot fire on the three columns of attack, until the well-ordered rushes of veteran infantry carried the weak places of the ancient ramparts. Inside the city the defence was obstinately kept up; and around or inside the chief mosques victory was assured only by the extermination of the Muslim. By four o'clock the fighting was over, and the last of the forts surrendered. Kléber and Menou sustained serious wounds as they bravely led on their columns; and the assailants in all lost about 40 killed and 100 wounded. At this slight cost did the French make good their position on land.

Reinforcements now poured in from Marabout and enabled Bonaparte to overawe by a show of force the populace which at the same time he sought to win over by clemency. In a skilfully worded proclamation he assured the peoples of Egypt that he had come to chastise only the governing caste of Mamelukes for their depredations on French merchants; that, far from wishing to destroy the religion of the Muslim, he had more respect for God, Mohammad, and the Koran than the Mamelukes had shown; that the French had destroyed the Pope and the Knights of Malta who levied war on the Muslim; thrice blessed, therefore, would be those who sided with the French, blessed even those who remained neutral, and thrice unhappy those who fought against them; the *sheikhs*, *cadis*, and *imams* might continue their duties, confiscating only the goods of the Mamelukes and thereby bringing glory to the Sultan. This proclamation, dated both in the Revolutionary and in the Muslim style,

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furnishes an instance of the wondrous adaptability of Bonaparte's genius. Many of its phrases were modelled on the Koran, which he carefully studied on the voyage; and the document throughout appealed very skilfully to the hatred felt by Arabs, Turks, Copts, and Bedouins alike, for the governing military caste of the Mamelukes.

These arrogant warriors, their ranks recruited by Circassian youths, formed a choice body of horsemen which held the Turkish Pasha representing the Sultan, the Turks and Arabs of the towns, the miserable and degraded Copts, and the desert tribes, in virtually complete subjection. They were organised in bands of 500 or 600 warriors headed by Beys, the chief of whom, Murad and Ibrahim, were in constant rivalry. This quasi-feudal order, which dated from the time of Saladin, had of late been unusually oppressive and extortionate; while their oppression of the handful of French merchants at the ports furnished Napoleon with the sole excuse for his enterprise, which in point of law ranked as mere piracy. True, the power of the Sultan in Egypt was now but a mere shadow; but time after time, in many a Province of the Turkish Empire, his power had sprung to new life even after seeming death; and Bonaparte's defence of his expedition, on the ground that it would bring glory to the Sultan, never imposed on the Turkish Pasha at Cairo, the Sultan's Minister at Paris, or the Sublime Porte itself. Scarcely more successful was Bonaparte's appeal to the Muslim, which sought to apply to the unbending dogmatism of the East that skilful policy of balance in religious matters whereby he had secretly gained credit with the Papacy and the orthodox in Italy and France. There, after the persecuting vagaries of the Jacobins, a trimmer was appreciated; in the East he was an unknown creature, and, when known, was despised. Denon relates that at the first interview of the Sheikh Koraim with Bonaparte, after the capture of Alexandria, he could discern in the Muslim's face a dissimulation shaken but not subdued by the generous conduct and politic appeals of the conqueror; and that phrase sums up once for all the mental attitude of the various strata of the Egyptian populace towards their self-styled liberators.

The Commander-in-chief well knew that victory alone could give weight to these arguments. He therefore acted with his usual swift decision. Leaving behind the wounded with Kléber, who for a time acted as governor of Alexandria, he ordered Desaix' divisions to set out on the night of July 3, for the desert march to Damanhûr. Even during the chilly night the troops plodded painfully through the shifting sand which covered most of the track. The Alexandrian canal was then dry, and the cisterns on the way had been filled with stones by the Arabs. Thus, when the sun smote on the already weary columns, the pangs of thirst became unbearable; and the succeeding columns, those of Reynier's division, finding the muddy bottoms of the cisterns drained almost dry, nearly perished from exhaustion. Panics and fusillades by

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night attested the state of nervous irritation of the troops; and, if the Mamelukes had attacked in force at this time, the result might have been fatal. They were content, however, with desultory skirmishing by day and cutting off the stragglers, a course of action which kept the fainting columns on the move and in something like order. It seems that the Mameluke chiefs, Murad and Ibrahim, hearing that the French were nearly all on foot, expected an easy triumph over them and sought to entice as many of them as possible into the heart of the country. Bonaparte fed this confidence by ordering the infantry to screen the cavalry so that the Mamelukes might be tempted to charge home. Nor was the French artillery to be used until the great battle came. The art of war, he wrote, consists in "keeping all my extraordinary means hidden, making no use of them, and thus surprising them [the enemy] the more when we have to fight a great force." These dispositions were completely successful.

On the 7th Desaix' and Reynier's men reached Damanhûr, where abundance of water was found. Three days later they struck the Nile itself at Rahmaniyeh, and the soldiers rushed into its waters to quench their unbearable thirst. Thenceforth their lot was easier; but the complaints both of officers and men did not cease; they even reached the ears of Bonaparte himself, who sternly rebuked the malcontents by his words and still more by sharing fully in the necessary hardships of the march. Meanwhile he charged Dugua, who temporarily took Kléber's place, to occupy Rosetta and thence make his way up the course of the Nile to rejoin the other divisions. This was successfully carried out, while the divisions of Bon and Vial (the latter for a time taking the place of Menou) made the shorter march across the desert to strengthen the vanguard. During the days of rest and concentration at Rahmaniyeh (July 10–12) the Commander-in-chief ordered the formation of a flotilla of boats so as to secure supplies and attack Mameluke positions on the banks of the river. On the 12th Bonaparte heard of the advance of Murad's horsemen to Chebreïss, or Chobrakit — the name is diversely spelt. The five divisions above named, moving forward in as many squares, soon drew the wished-for attack. The Mameluke horsemen, some 3000 strong, dashed forward, then circled round the squares in the hope of finding a weak spot; but on receiving a steady fire they soon wheeled off, baffled by superiority of numbers and discipline. Their contemptible infantry, largely armed with flails and sticks, was soon dislodged from the village. The French flotilla rendered good service in both operations (July 13).

Dismayed by this unlooked-for mishap, the Mamelukes now awaited the French near Cairo, contenting themselves with ordering the populace to come forth and throw up entrenchments at Embabeh on the opposite bank. Whether from jealousy of Murad, or from a belief that the French would divide and advance on both sides, Ibrahim kept his

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horsemen on the right bank; and great seemed to be his surprise on hearing that Bonaparte's army was wholly on the other side away from Cairo. Very few of Ibrahim's men crossed the river for the fight, and nearly 2000 choice warriors gazed helplessly across the river while the fate of the campaign rested with the cavaliers of Murad. On nearing the Mameluke forces shortly after noon of July 21, the French formed in five great hollow squares, having the cavalry inside and the cannon chiefly posted at the corners. The strongest division, that of Desaix, was on the right; next came those of Reynier and Dugua; while the divisions of Vial and Bon marched near to the river to storm the entrenchments of Embabeh. Desaix and Reynier bore the brunt of the attack; for the hastily formed entrenchments of Embabeh were held almost entirely by poorly armed fellaheen, who, like the vast crowd on the other bank of the Nile, believed that victory would come for their much shouting.

The squares of Desaix and Reynier had passed through the village of Bechtil and many of the men were spreading through its houses for plunder, when a cloud of Murad's horsemen drove onward against them. Charging in no set array, but with a fury that seemed to scorn death, they dashed on the front of the two squares. "I have never in all my military career," wrote General Belliard, "seen a charge pushed with so much vigour, and that cost the enemy so many men. The front of our divisions was covered with dead; there were some even who expired in our ranks." Many charged through the space between the two squares and into the village in the rear, where they fought with the stragglers, but were driven off by a detachment sent thither; others caracoled to and fro around the squares, losing heavily from the well-sustained fire. In half-an-hour all serious fighting was over on the French right wing. The central square, that of Dugua, in which Bonaparte took his stand, sustained no onset. On the left, the divisions of Bon and Vial easily forced the entrenchments of Embabeh; and Marmont, pushing on above that place, cut off the flight of mounted fugitives up the bank. Thereupon great numbers of fellaheen and some mounted Mamelukes threw themselves into the Nile; but very few reached the other side. Bertrand, who was in Bon's division, estimated the numbers drowned at 1000, the slain at 600. All the artillery and stores of the camp were taken, with 400 horses and as many camels. The losses of the Mamelukes who charged the right wing were also heavy, but the estimates vary very greatly. Murad, after showing signal daring, which cost him a sabre-cut on the cheek, now drew off his shattered bands towards the Pyramids and made for Upper Egypt: while his older, less enterprising, and more politic rival turned rein towards Cairo, whence he rode off in the night with his 2000 horsemen in the direction of Palestine; the Turkish Pasha accompanied him in his flight.

Such was the battle, afterwards known as the Battle of the Pyramids

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(July 21). The casualties of the French were surprisingly small, namely, about 30 killed and 300 wounded. In fact, apart from the losses sustained by the cutting off of stragglers during the march, the number of killed since the landing at Marabout did not as yet exceed 100 — a fact which sufficiently vouches for the steadiness of the French infantry and the skill of their leader in adapting himself to a novel kind of warfare.

On the night after the battle of the Pyramids Cairo was a scene of wild confusion. The departure of Ibrahim and his squadrons, the burning of the Mameluke flotilla at Embabeh, and the explosion of powder magazines threw the populace into an indescribable panic; rich merchants with their harems, Turks and Copts, traders and beggars, rushed into the desert, where many of them fell a prey to robbery and outrage at the hands of the Arabs. The city itself was given over to rapine. Bands of marauders forced open and burnt the palaces of Ibrahim and Murad, and began a general pillage; they even sought to overpower the Europeans in their quarter; these, however, offered a stout resistance which kept the rabble at bay until the dawn of day brought relief. Bonaparte had expected that Ibrahim would hold out in Cairo; but the subordinate official, whom the Turkish Pasha left behind without instructions at the time of his own hurried flight, now turned a ready ear to the solicitations of the European merchants that he should gain favour with the conqueror by a ready surrender. Commissioning them to be his emissaries, he despatched them to the French headquarters, now at Ghizeh. Bonaparte received them gladly, and at once sent Dupuy with half a brigade to receive the surrender of Cairo, while Bon's division was to hold the powerful citadel outside the city. These operations were easily effected on the evening of July 22 and in the course of the 23rd. Seeking even now to keep on good terms with Turkey, Bonaparte wrote to the absent Pasha assuring to him his position and his revenues, and promising that the Porte should receive its tribute as before. Whether this promise was meant to be permanent may be doubted; but in any case it was well suited to serve Bonaparte's immediate ends.

After entering Cairo on July 25 he appointed nine sheikhs to form a Divan supervising municipal affairs always under his own control. He further sought, and with some success, to tempt back the most influential of the fugitives and to revive trade and industry, by assuring protection for property and respect for the rites of the Muslim. On the 27th he established Divans for the provinces of Alexandria, Rosetta, Ghizeh, and Kelyoub, acting respectively under the control of Kléber, Menou, Belliard, and Murat; Intendants were charged with the collection of taxes formerly raised by the Mamelukes and thenceforth belonging to the French Republic. While seeking to promote order by civilised means, Bonaparte always recognised the need for severity, especially towards the rabble of Cairo. "Every day" (he wrote to Menou on July 31) "I have five or six heads cut off in the streets of Cairo." Nor did he relax

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his efforts against the Mamelukes. Desaix was already marching southwards to pursue Murad Bey's force, and Bonaparte vainly sought to win over that gallant chief by offering to leave him in undisturbed possession of the province of Girgeh as far south as the First Cataract. Overtures to Ibrahim having also failed, Bonaparte moved against him; and, after a sharp cavalry affair at Salahiyeh (August 11), Ibrahim withdrew from Egypt. An offer made by Bonaparte that they should come to an understanding through the Turkish Pasha brought no answer; Reynier's division and Leclerc's cavalry were therefore left to guard the eastern approaches to Egypt, while the commander retraced his course to Cairo.

But now, when the conquest seemed complete, news came to hand from Kléber that an unforeseen disaster had placed everything at hazard. When near Belbeïs on the 13th, Bonaparte heard that nearly the whole of his fleet had been destroyed by Nelson. Taking Kléber's aide-de-camp aside, he heard the details of the battle, whereupon he uttered the words: "We have no longer a fleet. Well! we must remain in these lands and then come forth great, like the ancients." Lavalette gives a variant of the story, making himself the central figure; but his version is inconsistent with the details given in the *Correspondance de Napoléon*.

With respect, however, to the question whether Bonaparte did, or did not, order Brueys to take the fleet away to Corfu, the *Correspondance* is untrustworthy. The general afterwards strove with all his might to prove that he did issue such an order; but the contemporary letters of Jaubert and Ganteaume, published in the *Intercepted Letters* (whose genuineness is admitted by de La Jonquière), prove, on the contrary, that Bonaparte ordered Brueys to remain on the Egyptian coast. Brueys afterwards found by repeated soundings that the harbour at Alexandria could not be entered and cleared with safety by large ships. Nothing therefore remained but to stay at Aboukir, with the result that is well known. Indeed, it is now quite clear that Bonaparte very much underrated the difficulties of the whole expedition. He stated in his letters to Joseph Bonaparte and others that he meant to return to France in the autumn of 1798. If this be so, he can never really have been bent on the grandiose projects that he afterwards put forward, namely, of conquering India and thereafter returning by Constantinople "to take Europe in the rear." The last much-quoted phrase occurs only in the not very trustworthy work compiled at St Helena by Las Cases from Napoleon's conversations. Indeed, in the case of one who so often acted on Talleyrand's adage, that language served to conceal thought, there can be no certainty as to his real intentions during the Egyptian Expedition. Of this alone we can be sure, that his ultimate aims were to dazzle France and to pave the way for his own supremacy when the Directory should be thoroughly discredited. In a letter which he wrote to Joseph Bonaparte in July, 1798, after hearing of the unfaithfulness of Joséphine, he urged his brother to buy an estate in Burgundy for him (Napoleon)

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to winter in. And it seems probable that disappointment at the state of affairs in Egypt may have helped to form this determination of returning speedily to France.

The Battle of the Nile seemed fatal even to the more practicable design of supervising the settlement of the colony and awaiting the first opportunity to return to France. At present, nothing could be done except to consolidate French rule in Egypt and trust to the chapter of accidents for communication with France. Bonaparte had as yet no official news from Paris; and none reached him until September 9. The army, officers and soldiers alike, had all along been disgusted by the unhealthiness and seeming bankruptcy of Egypt; the prevalent depression of spirits may be seen by the letters of Tallien and others in the *Intercepted Letters*, published by the British government. But Bonaparte's spirits rose with danger and isolation. In truth, the task of grafting French customs on an unkindly oriental stock served only to brace his organising faculties to their fullest strength. While supervising the administration of the country, the defence of the coast against the English fleet, that of the upper valley of the Nile against Murad, and that of the eastern frontier against Ibrahim, he sought to provide for the needs of the army by exploiting to the full the resources of Egypt and to lay the whole of civilisation under a lasting debt by pushing on the exploration of its long-buried treasures of art and learning. In order to impart method and consistency to these efforts he established at Cairo, on August 22, the Institute of Egypt, divided into four sections: (1) Mathematics, (2) Physics, (3) Political Economy (strictly speaking, Public Economy), (4) Literature and Arts. Each section was to hold two meetings a *décade*. The mathematician and physicist, Monge, was President; and Bonaparte accepted the office of Vice-President. The *Décade Égyptienne*, brought out every ten days at Cairo, and the *Mémoires sur l'Égypte*, published by order of the Tribunate of France in 1801, together with the works of Denon, Jomard, Monge, and Villiers du Terrage, show how varied were the activities of this Institute.

At the first sitting of the Institute, Bonaparte asked attention to the following questions: Could the baking ovens of the army be improved? Could any substitute be found for hops in the making of beer? What means were there of purifying the water of the Nile? Which was the more serviceable at Cairo, the windmill, or a mill turned by water? How could gunpowder be made in Egypt? In what position were jurisprudence and education in Egypt, and how could they be improved in ways wished for by the natives? These problems show how practical were the aims which Bonaparte set before the *savants*. Not that they were in any sense limited to enquiries of pressing utility. Later on, Denon and others studied the ruins of buildings, measured the Sphinx, and made drawings of the colossal statues; while Jomard began to unlock the secrets of hieroglyphics — a work greatly furthered a few

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years afterwards by means of the trilingual Rosetta Stone unearthed by Menou, which fell into British hands in 1801. Caffarelli, Monge, and Fourier prepared to measure the surface of the land. Monge, Berthollet, and other physicists and chemists, undertook an analysis of the different soils and studied the phenomena of the inundation of the Nile. Conté and Hassenfratz sought to establish the manufacture of cannon and gunpowder, the minting of coins, the tanning of leather, etc.; while the medical enthusiasm of Larrey and Desgenettes effected a slight and temporary improvement in the hygiene of Cairo. All men were stimulated by the phenomenal activity and buoyant strength of Bonaparte himself, who succeeded in breathing something of his spirit into the soldiers and civilians and even in reconciling them to Egypt.

But his deference to Muslim rites, his attendance and recital of prayers with the due swayings of the body at the festival of the Prophet's natal day, his encouragement of the joyous customs attending the rising of the Nile, failed to win over the faithful to whole-hearted allegiance. The *ulemas* were never deceived; and when exactions and heavy taxes spread discontent throughout the Delta, and measures of severe repression promptly followed, rebellion flamed forth at Cairo on October 21. Here the first rumours of approaching hostilities with Turkey helped to excite passions in all quarters. A convoy of French wounded coming from Salahiyeh was massacred by Arabs near the northern gate. The news spread through the city; at once the rabble rose in revolt, while the *imams* of the mosques proclaimed war on the unbelievers. General Dupuy was killed; the troops had to give ground; and a large part of Cairo fell into the hands of the rebels. Street fighting would have cost the French too dear; their commander therefore ordered Dommartin to plant cannon on rising ground near the citadel and rain balls on the headquarters of the revolt, the Grand Mosque itself; the cannonade was kept up through the night, while Lannes beat off an attack of Arabs and peasants from without. The horrors of that night and the loss of some 2000 men cowed the insurgents of Cairo into surrender; thereupon Bonaparte took summary vengeance on the Arabs who had massacred the convoy of wounded. A band of troops led by his aides-de-camp, Eugène Beauharnais and Croizier, surprised the supposed perpetrators of the deed and cut off their heads; these were placed in sacks, taken to Cairo, and rolled forth on the Ezbekiyeh square, to the horror of the populace. This display of ferocity made Bonaparte master of Cairo. It is, however, noteworthy that many of the traders had held aloof from the rising. Denon relates several cases in which Frenchmen were hidden away in safety; his own abode was protected by a friendly Muslim who came to smoke at the door as if it were his own. The Institute also escaped the widespread pillage.

Bonaparte now instructed his engineers, Caffarelli and Bertrand, to build forts to overawe the most unruly quarters. The formation of a

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mercantile company, composed of the chief European traders, promised to renew the commerce of the city, which had nearly vanished, along with gold and silver money, since the French invasion. Other signs seemed to augur well for the future. In spite of great natural difficulties, Desaix had waged a successful campaign against Murad Bey in the Fayoum and was now driving him towards Assouan. Accordingly, at Christmastide Bonaparte set out from Cairo for Suez, which had already been occupied by part of Bon's division. During his brief sojourn there he took steps for reviving the trade of this once important city and surveying the coasts southward to Tor and the Island of Shadwan. At Suez, too, he received a deputation from the monks of Mount Sinai, whom he gratified by signing his name in their volume; it was the same in which Selim, Saladin, and, it is said, even the Prophet himself, had written their names, recommending the monastery to the consideration of their followers. Near Suez Bonaparte detected traces of the ancient canal cut by Sesostris between the Red Sea and the Nile; its course was subsequently traced for a long distance; but events rendered it impossible to undertake the larger scheme of connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. During this journey Bonaparte gave orders for the construction of two corvettes and also for the formation of a camel-corps; the mobility of such a body had been proved by Desaix during his campaign in Upper Egypt.

The commander-in-chief's return to Cairo was hastened by the capture of despatches from Ibrahim and Djezzar, which proved that the Mamelukes now had the help of Djezzar, the virtually independent Pasha of Acre. Their vanguard had already advanced as far as El Arish, a fort situated on the oasis between Palestine and Egypt; and this seemed to presage hostilities on the part of Turkey. In point of fact the Sultan had been at war with France since September 11; and on December 23, 1798, he concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with Russia, to which Great Britain acceded on January 2, 1799. France had declared war on Naples on December 4, 1798. These important events were but dimly known to Bonaparte, to whom the Directory rarely deigned to send news; but on February 8 he heard through merchants coming on a Ragusan ship that the Neapolitans had declared war on France and driven the French from Rome; while a large Russo-Turkish fleet was blockading Corfu. Bonaparte, asserting that this news was confused and contradictory, assured the Directory, two days later, that the last tidings brought from Europe were to the effect that all was quiet in that continent.

Whatever were his inmost thoughts on this all-important subject, he resolved to strike at his foes on the borders of Syria before the outbreak of war with Turkey. The following practical statements in his letter of February 10, if contrasted with the grandiose schemes which he afterwards assigned as the real aim of the Syrian Expedition, reveal something of the difference that exists between the Bonaparte of fact and the

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Bonaparte of romance. "In this operation I have three aims: (1) To assure the conquest of Egypt by constructing a stronghold beyond the desert, and thenceforth to remove the armies of any nation whatsoever from Egypt to such a distance that they can in no way combine with a European army which should come to land on its coasts. (2) To oblige the Porte to explain itself and thereby support the negotiations that you have doubtless set on foot, and the mission of the consul Beauchamp, whom I am sending to Constantinople on the great Turkish caravel. (3) Finally, to deprive the English fleet of the supplies that it draws from Syria, by employing the two remaining months of winter so as to make all that coast friendly to me through war and negotiations." He concluded by renewing the promise already made in his letter of October 7, 1798, that, if he heard of the outbreak of war between France and the Kings, he would return.

We may here point out that even after the destruction of the French fleet at Aboukir, Bonaparte seems to have cherished the hope that Turkey would not regard the French seizure of Egypt as a *casus belli*—a signal proof of the tenacity with which he clung to preconceived notions. It is also worth remarking that, if he really believed in the possibility of peace with Turkey, he cannot at the same time have been seriously preparing to march through Asia Minor with a view to the conquest of Constantinople.

In fact this latter project seems to be a gloss on the original plan, which was to strike at Ibrahim and Djezzar, before their forces marched into Egypt and joined any British force that might be sent. Still less is there any trace in his letters, written at that time, of the scheme of marching to India. It is true that, on January 25, 1799, he wrote to the Imam of Muscat asking him to forward a letter to Tippoo Sahib, in which he informed that ruler of the arrival on the banks of the Red Sea of his "innumerable and invincible army, filled with the desire of delivering you from the iron yoke of England." But surely this was only a device to busy the British in India, and thereby weaken any attempt that they might make to land in Egypt. We may note in passing that the effect of this missive was annulled by the news of the battle of the Nile, which Nelson had been careful to send on to Bombay by way of Aleppo. Finally, it is noteworthy that Bonaparte's Syrian army consisted of four small divisions, those of Kléber, Reynier, Bon, and Lannes, and numbered rather fewer than 13,000 fighting men. As many as 10,000 soldiers were left in Lower Egypt, while Desaix' force campaigning on the Upper Nile comprised 6500 men. A statement of these numbers shows that the Syrian force, at least at the outset, was not intended for any far-reaching enterprise. If the invasion of European Turkey, or of India, was contemplated, it must have been before the battle of the Nile wrested from France the command of the sea. Doubtless, Bonaparte looked on the acquisition of the Syrian ports and of Suez as affording valuable bases for future military and naval expeditions;

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but his letters and the dispositions of his troops seem to prove that those wider designs were not to be carried out with the slender military and naval resources, and amidst the political uncertainties, of the present. If any further proof of this be needed it is to be found in his letter of June 28, 1799, to the Directors, where he writes that, if they succeed in sending him 15,000 more men, "we shall be able to go anywhere, even to Constantinople." This was perhaps in answer to their despatch of November 4, 1798 (which did not reach him until the end of March at Acre), wherein they urged him, if he thought it advisable, to strike at Delhi or at Constantinople. At that time, however, the goal of his ambition was certainly not Delhi, but Paris.

We now return to the events of the Syrian campaign. On February 8 the French vanguard under Reynier had a doubtful and bloody encounter with the Turks and Mamelukes at El Arish; but the arrival of the division of Kléber and his skilful night attack on the relieving force sent by Djezzar decided the fate of the fort, which surrendered on February 20. The garrison of 1500 men was released on condition that it would not take part in the war in Syria or Egypt for a year. Marching on by way of Gaza and Ramleh, the French appeared before Jaffa on March 4. On the two following days they repelled vigorous sorties, and learnt from some Albanian prisoners that all the garrison of El Arish had come to join that of Jaffa. On March 7, when the walls were already breached by the French cannon, Bonaparte offered easy terms in case of capitulation. In reply the head of his envoy was cut off and placed on a pike over the chief tower. The French then redoubled their cannonade until, shortly after noon, Lannes' column of assault rushed up the breach and swept the ramparts clear. Building after building fell before the fury of the French, who gave no quarter; two of Bonaparte's aides-de-camp, however, ventured to spare the lives of a large number in a caravanserai. This incident placed him in a difficult position. Food was very scarce; the garrison had violated the rules of war — some of them twice over; and after a deliberation of two days he decided to have the 2000 survivors shot. The ghastly sentence was carried out on the seashore, the doomed men meeting their fate with Eastern stoicism.

During the halt at Jaffa the plague began to make its ravages felt. Some 200 men of Kléber's division had already died of it at Alexandria: and the lurking pest now rapidly spread among the victors. Bonaparte decided to march against Acre, so as to keep the disease under by exercise and fresh air.

After a sharp action with the enemy at Kakoun, not far from Nablûs, the army made its way to Haïfa, the roadstead near Acre, and Bonaparte established his headquarters on a spur of Mount Carmel (March 17). Thence he could discern in the distance two British men-of-war off Acre. They were H.M.Ss. *Theseus* and *Tigre*, under the command of Commodore Sir Sidney Smith, a brave but somewhat vain

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and self-willed young officer, who, after Nelson's fleet was ordered away to the coast of Naples, received the command of the remaining British ships in the Levant. He had cannonaded Alexandria early in February with little result; and, knowing the importance which his nominal chief, Nelson, attached to Acre — witness the Nelson despatches of December 17, 1798 — he sent on the *Theseus* to that port, and speedily followed thither with the *Tigre*. The former ship had on board a skilled French engineer, Phélippeaux, who at once began to improve the ruinous defences.

It fell to Sir Sidney Smith to effect still more for the defence. After the fall of Jaffa, Bonaparte ordered the French flotilla at Damietta to set sail for that town and await instructions, which directed it to Acre. On March 18 he sent word to Jaffa to detain the flotilla there. But it was now too late. Already the flotilla was nearing Mount Carmel; in rounding that promontory it was seen by the *Tigre*, which chased and captured all the seven vessels, though not the corvette convoying them. The prizes were of priceless value; they mounted 34 guns in all, and carried besides the siege artillery and ammunition on which Bonaparte reckoned for the reduction of Acre. Thenceforth the assailants had to bear the fire of their own heavy ordnance, while for the present they had to rely on two carronades taken at Haïfa, four mortars, and 36 field-pieces. The walls, however, were very weak; as Sir Sidney said, they were defences and not fortifications. Moreover, Djezzar, more anxious to preserve his independence from the attacks of a Turkish fleet than to guard against the onsets of Syrian tribes by land, had mounted all his best guns on the sea front. The French, despite the mishap to their siege train, expected to make short work of the defence. In this, however, they reckoned without taking due account of the exposure of columns of assault to flanking fire from the enemy's ships. The position of Acre, on a low-lying promontory of rectangular shape, gave the utmost possible advantage to the Power that held the sea. The natural conditions were exactly the converse of those prevailing at Toulon. There, in 1793, the configuration of the land placed the allied fleet at the mercy of the investing army as soon as it mastered the promontory commanding the harbour. At Acre the war-ships commanded both the approaches and the town itself. Some of the small gunboats were, however, sunk by the French guns early in the siege.

The French broke ground for their trenches on March 19. Caffarelli, the commander of the engineers, proposed to breach the walls at the north-eastern corner, as being the farthest removed from the ships, and also because the aqueduct and ruins in that vicinity partly covered the approaches; while at the corner itself stood a lofty tower, which, when once seized, would enable the assailants to dominate that part of the town. The bombardment began on March 23; and on the afternoon of the next day a great part of the tower fell with a crash. But Phélippeaux and Captain Miller of the *Theseus*, foreseeing such a mishap, had made

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a counterscarp which now stopped all efforts of the French sappers. Djezzar in his alarm had gone on board a ship; but, seeing the firm behaviour of the British sailors and marines, he now decided on a desperate defence. Part of the counterscarp was blown up on the 28th, and heroic efforts were made by Bon and Laugier to carry the place by storm; but the attempt ended in a bloody repulse, which cost Laugier his life. Nevertheless, the guns on the wall, the broadsides of the shipping, and the frequent sallies of the garrison failed to stop the progress of the French in their trenches; and by the middle of April the combatants were often within pistol-range.

Already, however, news had come that the Pasha of Damascus was mustering large but hitherto scattered bands on the right bank of the Jordan. To attack these relieving forces before they neared Acre was as sound strategy as that which had dictated the whole of the Syrian campaign. Accordingly, Bonaparte sent off Murat and Junot with 1000 men to attack the northern bands — an enterprise in which Junot completely succeeded near Nazareth on April 8. Meanwhile Kléber, with his division, was heading towards the Pasha's main body with the aim of cutting it off from Damascus. Not far from the foot of Mount Tabor he was himself sharply attacked and surrounded by hordes of yelling horsemen. The inequality of numbers placed his small division in jeopardy, when, to the joy of his dauntless but weary infantry, the sound of Bonaparte's cannon was heard among the hills. The commander-in-chief, divining the risks incurred by his daring lieutenant, was marching to the rescue with part of Bon's division. Skilfully screening his onset, he came upon the enemy when in the midst of their most furious efforts to pierce Kléber's ranks. The surprise was the more astounding, the victory the more complete; and hundreds of the Turks, Mamelukes, Nablusians, and Syrian tribesmen, were sabred in their flight or perished in the waters of the Jordan (April 16–17). After an absence of only five days from Acre, Bonaparte returned in triumph, believing that the Christians of the Lebanon and other Syrian tribes would now espouse his cause. Some of them did so; but the majority waited to see the issue of events at Acre — an attitude that was confirmed by Sir Sidney Smith's skilful device of sending among them copies of the Muslim address which Bonaparte had put forth after his capture of Alexandria.

At Acre, meanwhile, the fortune of war still hung in the balance. On the day of Bonaparte's return to the camp (April 19) three French frigates from Alexandria succeeded in landing six heavy pieces of artillery near Mount Carmel; for so fierce and persistent was the fighting at Acre that Sir Sidney Smith dared not remove his ships from that position. These same frigates, however, soon afterwards brought news of the approach of a Turkish fleet and convoy, two of whose ships they had captured. The news gave new vigour to the assailants, fortified as they already were by the increase to their battering power. On April 25

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they fired a mine with terrific effect, bringing down half of the great tower, killing its garrison, and making a great breach in the walls; but the storming column that rushed forward was baffled by inner entrenchments and the loopholed walls of the Mosque and of Djezzar's palace. The French guns thereafter breached the second tower on the east front, that nearer the sea, and battered down stretches of the walls; in reply to which Phélippeaux and the British officers built two revelins, one covering the eastern wall near the gate by the sea, the other on the north front near Djezzar's palace. The enfilading fire from these projecting angles, and the musketry poured in from the inner walls, helped the British bluejackets and Djezzar's Albanians to beat off the assault of May 1. On that day Phélippeaux succumbed to sunstroke; but the crisis of the struggle found an able successor, Colonel Douglas, ready to take his place.

That crisis was now at hand. On May 4 the second tower showed a practicable breach, and the French mine driven towards the counter-scarp between the two towers was nearing its goal, when the British engineers countermined with equal rapidity and success, thereby causing the final assault to be postponed to the 9th. But on the 7th the Turkish fleet hove in view on the horizon. The sight determined Bonaparte to carry the place at once. A light breeze blowing from the land promised to delay the rescuers several hours; and within that time the three solid columns of assault must, it appeared, overwhelm the feeble defences. Rambeaud headed the force that made for the second breach; Escale's column was to penetrate by the ruins of the great tower; while it fell to Lannes, with the third column, to clinch the affair at one or other of these places. The first column rushed over the short distance between the trenches and the walls, protected from the ships' broadsides by traverses which the French engineers had skilfully thrown up, but riddled by grapeshot from two British guns, one in the lighthouse, the other in the east ravelin. Nevertheless, the column swept up the breach and through the first defences, there to be checked and finally driven back about nightfall by the concentric fire poured on them from the town. At the great tower the first success of the French was equally brilliant and better sustained. Again they seized and held its remaining portion; and daylight showed the tricolour waving from its summit. Seeing that the boats of the Turkish fleet were as yet but halfway to shore, while the fire of the defence was slackening, Sir Sidney at once landed sailors and marines, and led them to the place of danger, which he held until the Turkish succours arrived. The rescuers now assumed the offensive, and made a sally against the French trenches; but they were cut off or beaten back with heavy losses, which some French memoir-writers have reckoned at 6000 men. At this time Kléber's division was ready to hand, elated by its victory at Mount Tabor. Bonaparte urged on these choice troops against the wearied garrison; but the bravery of Kléber, Lannes,

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and their devoted followers, dashed itself in vain against British tenacity and Muslim fanaticism. The defenders now let the storming parties come in by way of the great tower into Djezzar's garden, and there laid them low by bullet, sabre, and dagger. Lannes was dragged away by his grenadiers half dead from this death-trap; and in the end both armies sank back exhausted by twenty-five hours of murderous conflict.

Still the French kept their lodgment at the great tower; and Smith in his official report of May 9 stated that, as the great breach could be ascended by 50 men abreast, the defence would probably be overpowered. He clung on, however, with praiseworthy stubbornness, and the event justified his high-souled resolve. The plague was now spreading among the French, and impaired their striking power. On May 10 Bonaparte wrote to the Directory that it would cost him too many men to storm the town house by house, and that "having reduced Acre to a heap of stones," and fulfilled the aim of his expedition, he would return to Egypt so as to be ready to oppose the European or Turkish army which might be expected to land there in July or August. His decision was probably influenced by news gained from English prisoners of the outbreak of war in Europe and the entry of the French into Naples — an event which promised to bring about a second coalition. This was far more threatening news than that which he had received at the close of March, when a courier arrived bringing the Directors' despatch of November 4, with no decisive tidings from Europe, and allowing him to strike at Constantinople or India. There was now nothing left but to return to Egypt. Accordingly after nine days more of heavy cannonading he drew off his troops in the night of May 20–21, having already sent off the wounded.

The exact losses of the French before Acre will probably never be known, owing to the politic reticence of their leader. His own official estimate of 500 killed and 1000 wounded in the whole of the Syrian campaign was of course only intended to reassure the French public; it is also utterly inconsistent with his statement to the Directory on June 28, 1799, that the whole Egyptian campaign had cost him 5344 men. At St Helena he told Admiral Malcolm that the "expedition to Acre" had cost him 6000 men, of whom 1600 were killed. Larrey, the chief physician, states in his *Relation* that 800 wounded were finally sent from Jaffa to Egypt by land and 1200 by sea. Nearly all these losses were incurred at Acre. Among the slain were Generals Bon, Caffarelli, and Rambeaud, four adjutants, and 43 other officers. In sore plight the army wound its way back to Jaffa, harassed on the seaboard by British gunboats and among the sand-hills by the Nablusians. In spite of Bonaparte's efforts many of the wounded were cut off or left behind. At Jaffa most of the sufferers were sent on by sea to Egypt, receiving on their way chivalrous aid in supplies from Sir Sidney Smith. The stories circulated by Wilson and Miot, that numbers of the plague-stricken French were poisoned in the Jaffa hospitals by order of Bonaparte just

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before his departure, are disproved by Larrey's account, as also by Sir Sidney's despatch of May 30 from Jaffa: "Seven poor wretches are left alive in the hospital; they are protected and shall be taken care of." The army with difficulty surmounted the toils of the last marches through the desert. The crops around Jaffa, Ramleh, and Gaza, were burnt in order to deprive pursuers of supplies; and a garrison was left at El Arish. The strength of Bonaparte's will was never more displayed than during the prolonged agonies of the retreat to Egypt; and this same faculty enabled him to inspire his exhausted troops with energy to figure as the conquerors of Syria on their return. Kléber's division was diverted to Damietta, while most of the troops marched to Cairo, and on June 14 made a triumphal entry, displaying the 16 Turkish officers and 17 flags captured. The army had covered the 300 miles from Acre in twenty-six days—a marvellous performance, if we consider the absence of roads and the other difficulties to be overcome.

Bonaparte found the colony heaving with ill-suppressed excitement. As to this we may cite the evidence of a letter written on May 5, by General Dugua, the commander at Cairo, to General Damas, and stating that there was a general ferment, which must lead to revolt if Bonaparte's army did not soon return. He added these ominous words: "We stand in need of money, money, money, also men, munitions of war, wood, iron, and the good-will of the inhabitants." The only encouraging fact of the situation was that Desaix had worsted Murad Bey in a tedious campaign on the Upper Nile and was now, with the aid of General Belliard, governing that Province with success.

Events, however, once again threatened the whole work of conquest with demolition. At Ghizeh, on July 15, the commander-in-chief heard from Marmont at Alexandria that a large Turkish fleet was in sight. At once he set out for Rahmaniyeh, and on his arrival there, hearing that some 10,000 Turkish regulars had landed at Aboukir and stormed the fort, he ordered a concentration of troops, Kléber's division moving to Rosetta, while Desaix began to evacuate Upper Egypt. By these means Bonaparte, on July 21, opposed the Turkish expedition with a force nearly as large, which, in pursuance of his usual rule, he massed together when at a prudent distance from the enemy. With this he moved to Birket, thence to Alexandria, and prepared for an immediate attack on the two lines of entrenchments which the Turks had hastily thrown up across the narrow isthmus west of Aboukir. A village, on which their centre rested, presented the chief defence of the first line. On the two wings Lannes, who now commanded Bon's division, and d'Estaing, speedily burst through the defences opposite them, while the horsemen and dromedaries of Murat, easily clearing all impediments at the centre, threw the whole of the first line into utter disorder. Many hundreds of the Turks rushed into the sea and were drowned in the effort to reach their gun-vessels.

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Bonaparte gave his troops a few hours' rest before attacking the second line of defence; this was strengthened at the centre by a redoubt, and in the rear was the old fort of Aboukir, now in possession of the enemy. At three o'clock the second battle began; at first d'Estaing gained a lodgment on the Turkish right, while Lannes forced the entrenchments near the lake; but the fire from the redoubt speedily checked the French centre and left, while the volleys from the gunboats on the lake foiled Murat's utmost efforts to penetrate on that side. The attack failed; the French had fallen back, when the Turks rushed out of their entrenchments to slay the wounded and mutilate the dead. At once Bonaparte ordered an attack on the barbarian horde; and the French, fiercely rallying, burst through their disordered bands and seized the earthworks. Murat and his horsemen also swept with the refluent tide into the space between the entrenchments and the fort, and, driving before them the terror-stricken mob, sabred hundreds in the shallows and choked many more in the depths. Heavy cannon were then brought up against the fort and for two days dealt havoc among the crowded and stifled garrison. When more than half had perished, the 2000 wretched survivors surrendered. They were almost the only relic of a picked Turkish army of more than 10,000 men.

This extraordinary exploit seemed to fulfil Bonaparte's resolve, expressed in a letter of July 20, that the Turks must have a lesson such as would assure to France the possession of Egypt. But the results of this dramatic triumph were to be compromised by the news conveyed in a packet of newspapers which Sir Sidney Smith sent ashore in the course of the arrangements for an exchange of prisoners. Bonaparte had as yet received only two despatches from the Directory during his fifteen months' absence from France; and he could not know that on May 26 the Directors had written a letter urging him and a large part of the army to leave Egypt on the powerful fleet of Admiral Bruix, then on the coast of Provence, and destined by them for Egypt. For reasons which cannot here be detailed, Bruix left the Mediterranean, and the project came to naught. We may remark here that the report of Bonaparte frequently receiving news from France through his brothers is probably incorrect. If he had had such news he would not have persevered so long with the siege of Acre; nor would he have shown the eager interest that he now displayed as he read the papers, the *Journal de Francfort*, and the *Courrier Français* of London, all through the night of August 2–3. His resolve was taken at once. The decisive triumph of Aboukir enabled him to leave Egypt and take up those political designs in France of which he had never lost sight. The next day he had a private talk with Rear-Admiral Ganteaume, then set out on the Nile for a hasty visit to Cairo, and quickly returned, giving out that he was going to make an inspection of the coast. Sir Sidney Smith having left those waters in order to revictual at Cyprus, there was no

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difficulty in secretly putting off by night from the coast, about a league to the west of Alexandria. The hurried rush of generals and aides-de-camp into the boats showed the eagerness of the little party to have done with Egypt. Besides Bonaparte there were Berthier, Murat, Lannes, Marmont, Andrèossi, Bessières, Ganteaume, Eugène Beauharnais, Duroc, Bourrienne, and Merlin, as well as the *savants*, Monge, Berthollet, Denon, and others. The Venetian-built frigates, *Muiron* and *Carrère*, received this illustrious company, and through many risks bore them safely to France, Bonaparte landing at Fréjus on October 9.

The departure of the commander-in-chief was perfectly justifiable on political grounds. The dangerous position of France now called him to fulfil his repeated promises to the Directory that he would return as soon as the conquest of Egypt seemed to be assured. The crushing blow to the choice Turkish force at Aboukir seemed to seal that conquest; and the call of duty summoned him to defend the Cisalpine Republic, and if possible to save its stronghold, Mantua. Nevertheless, his hasty and stealthy departure aroused in the army bitter feelings which found vent in gibes at *Bonatrape*. In truth, the expedition had never been popular. Egypt disappointed the hopes of nearly all but the *savants*. The prospect of possessing six *arpents* of its soil had called forth the jeers of the soldiery from the time of their arrival; and the hope of dealing in the future a death-blow to England's eastern commerce scarcely reconciled the soldiers to arrears of pay, ophthalmia, dysentery, and insect pests in the present. Bonaparte's will nerved them throughout to their manifold toils; but, this motive power gone, officers and men gave way to discontent and lassitude.

Kléber, his successor, was a hero in fight, but lacked Bonaparte's statesmanlike qualities. His very natural annoyance at his chief's treatment of him increased when he found out the bankrupt state of the colony. His despatches of September 11 and October 8 show that on taking over the command there was not a *sou* in the military chests; the arrears of pay amounted to 3,000,000 francs, while the general budget showed in the autumn of 1799 a deficit of 10,000,000 francs. Though Bonaparte afterwards sought to disprove these statements, it is now clear that Kléber really understated the case. The statistics given in the *Intercepted Letters* (vol. III, pp. 60, 61) show that the deficit exceeded 11,000,000 francs. Kléber therefore stopped many of the public works ordered by Bonaparte, and confessed in the despatch of October 8 (written to the Directory and intercepted by British cruisers) that, since the destruction of the French fleet at Aboukir, peace with Turkey would alone enable them to "withdraw from an enterprise the objects of which were no longer attainable." This opinion was not shared by the second in command, General Menou; but Kléber came to believe, and not unreasonably, that the case set forth in Bonaparte's last letter of August 22 to him had virtually arisen: namely, that if no succour should come from

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France before the month of May following, and the plague should carry off more than 1500 men, he would be justified in treating for peace with Turkey, even if it implied the retrocession of Egypt. It is true that Bonaparte accompanied this guarded advice by the warning that such a surrender would be a terrible misfortune for France; for, in the imminent decay of Turkey, her Egyptian Provinces would probably go to another European Power. But the mere stating of the conditions that might justify surrender is certain to predispose a successor to that step, when he feels himself deserted and overwhelmed by difficulties.

The whole army naturally thought itself deserted. The naval help, on which Bonaparte very naturally counted, through the combined action of the French and Spanish fleets, was not forthcoming; Britain continued to lord it over the Mediterranean; and Kléber was glad to enter into terms with the Turks, under the sanction of Sir Sidney Smith, in the Treaty of El Arish (January 24, 1800), by which the French forces were to evacuate Egypt, on condition of their not serving against Great Britain and Turkey in the present war. In agreeing to this arrangement, Sir Sidney Smith not only exceeded his original instructions but contravened Nelson's order of March 18, 1799: "I must *strictly charge and command you* never to give any French ship or man leave to quit Egypt." In obedience to instructions from the Admiralty, Lord Keith, the admiral then commanding in the Mediterranean, also wrote to Smith from Port Mahon in the same sense on January 8, 1800; but he did not receive the letter before he sanctioned the El Arish agreement. Keith also sent a letter to Kléber to warn him that the French would not leave Egypt unless they surrendered as prisoners of war with their ships and stores. On seeing that Smith had exceeded his powers, Kléber indignantly exclaimed against English perfidy, renewed the war, and inflicted a severe defeat on the Turks at Heliopolis (March 20, 1800).

These last events, however, fall without the limits of this volume; and we can only state that Kléber was assassinated by a Muslim fanatic on June 14, 1800, and that his successor, General Manou, still more signally failed to overcome the growing difficulties of his position. Despite Bonaparte's efforts after Marengo to send succour from Italy, very few vessels succeeded in eluding the British fleet. In March, 1801, a British force under General Abercrombie landed in Aboukir Bay, and the battle outside Alexandria, which cost him his life, virtually decided the fate of the French garrisons. His successor, Hutchinson, cautiously advanced towards Cairo, which the Grand Vizier approached from the north-east. General Baird, with a force drawn mainly from India, and in part from the Cape of Good Hope, had landed at Kosseir in the Red Sea, but was not in time to take part in the fighting outside Cairo. The garrison, under General Belliard, soon surrendered; it comprised about 9000 effectives (including some Greeks and Ethiopians) and 4000 sick, with 320 cannon. Menou, who held out in Alexandria, exclaimed

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against Belliard's action as an eternal disgrace to the French arms; in fact he hoped for the arrival of a French squadron with 5000 men, which Bonaparte had sent off. Hutchinson and Coote, however, pressed him so hard that he also capitulated with 10,500 men (inclusive of some Greeks), 312 cannon, and a few ships of war (August 30, 1801). Both of these forces were to be conveyed back to France as prisoners of war. The works of art and curios gained by the *savants* for the museums of France were likewise to be surrendered, though this rule was not carried out with undue stringency and they retained their private collections.

Bonaparte's rage at the news of the loss of Egypt proved the reality of his ulterior designs, as expressed in his letter of October 7, 1798, to the Directory: "The European Power which is mistress of Egypt is in the long run mistress of India." However much we may doubt his later statement, "*J'ai manqué à ma fortune à St Jean d'Acre*" — if this means that he was then on the high road to conquer India — it is nevertheless certain that he looked on the conquest of Egypt, together with Jaffa and Acre, as a needful preliminary to that enterprise, to which he so persistently returned in the years 1803, 1807, and 1810. His imperious nature instinctively felt that the docile, fate-ridden peoples of the East would offer more yielding material than the sturdier nations of Europe, and that in the Orient his star would speedily rise to the zenith, dazzling the Western world with an irresistible splendour. He was also strongly attracted by the Mohammadan creed, for which, even at St Helena, he many times expressed his preference over that of Christianity, as being simpler and more suited to the elemental morality of Eastern peoples. His remarks to Gourgaud and Las Cases on this topic show how highly he admired the warlike prowess evoked by the Prophet, and the appeal to the sensuous instincts which nerves the Moslem in the hour of danger. In one other respect Bonaparte seemed made for the East. His frame resembled that of a seasoned oriental. In Egypt he shook off the febrile symptoms contracted during the hardships of the long autumn siege of Toulon, and showed the underlying strength of his constitution. When others flagged in the scorching heat, he went about buoyant and active (so Savary asserts), his uniform tightly buttoned up to his throat as at Paris, and never showing the slightest discomfort. Physically, then, as well as in the boundless range of his ambition and the dogmatic and semi-fatalistic cast of his mind, he was uniquely equipped for conquering Asiatics and holding them in awe. What would he not have achieved had these instinctive longings been realised in action?

Even amidst the failure of these designs, it is clear that they worked mightily on the European polity. In one sense the Egyptian Expedition was a melodramatic enterprise, intended to exalt the fame of Bonaparte at the expense of the unpicturesque mediocrities who then ruled at Paris; and as such it was an unqualified success. The inability of the Directors to ride out the political storm which their folly had so largely

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provoked was exposed at the very time when stories of Bonaparte's Eastern exploits were on every tongue; and rumour made of him a St Louis, crusading for the glory of France and banished from her shores by the envy of self-seeking incompetence. This contrast goes far to explain the events of Brumaire.

Moreover, the Eastern expedition gave a colonial and commercial bias to French policy which brought it into sharper conflict than ever with that of Britain. The quarrel respecting predominance in the Netherlands—the chief cause of war in 1793—was now envenomed by the blow aimed at Britain's Eastern Empire. This accounts for the energy thrown by Pitt's Ministry into Mediterranean and Indian affairs, as also for their efforts to form a new coalition in Europe. Thus the Revolutionary wars, which seemed in 1797 to have burnt themselves out on the Continent, once more wrapped it in flame. Finally, the new struggle, being prompted ultimately by commercial and colonial disputes between England and France, and by territorial questions in Europe itself, was of a very different character from that waged by the *sans-culottes* of 1793. The change of motive soon showed itself in the changed temper of the combatants. If Bonaparte was right in stating to Talleyrand, shortly before the Treaty of Campo Formio, that they no longer had in France the same enthusiasm and the same "great masses" as means of recruiting, it was doubly true now that the cycle of war revolved about questions analogous to those of the reign of the *Grand Monarque*. And while democratic ardour inevitably waned, the need of far-seeing statesmanship and capable administration was ever on the increase, thereby forging one more link in the chain of circumstances that bound the fortunes of Bonaparte to those of his adopted country.

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CHAPTER XX

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

DURING the spring of 1798 the British Admiralty received disquieting reports of a great armament which was preparing at Toulon, ostensibly for an expedition to Ireland. Its true purpose was however as yet obscure, though from the unseaworthy condition of the transports collected it was most improbable that the force would be risked upon the Atlantic. The Mediterranean had now been abandoned by the British fleet for more than a year, and the French, if they cared to face heavy risks, might strike at any country on its littoral. On May 2, 1798, Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson was detached from Lord St Vincent's fleet blockading Cadiz, with three ships of the line and five small craft, his orders being to use every effort to ascertain what the French were doing and what were their real objects. Soon after he had parted company, St Vincent sent after him, recalling him to take the command of a much stronger squadron; but the message never reached him. He was sighted by the French scouts off Toulon on May 17, and made some small captures on the coast of Provence. From the men on board these he learnt that a large fleet and army were on the point of sailing for some unknown destination. While cruising off Toulon and endeavouring to obtain further information, his flagship was dismasted (May 20), owing, in all probability, to the inexperience of her crew, for she was newly commissioned and badly manned. His small craft parted company, and he was left with the battleships alone. He was compelled to retire to the Sardinian coast to refit, and thus he missed the French fleet for the first time. It had sailed from Toulon on May 19.

Meantime St Vincent had received orders from England to send a fleet into the Mediterranean, as soon as reinforcements should have reached him, with the object of destroying the Toulon armament. He was informed that he might either go himself as commander of that fleet, or choose a subordinate, preferably Nelson. This selection of an officer whose transcendent capacity was not then fully understood at home, and who had incurred the reputation in the Navy of reckless temerity, has been attributed with much probability to the personal

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influence of George III, whose son, the Duke of Clarence, knew Nelson intimately and had divined his great qualities. St Vincent was no less an admirer of Nelson, and acted upon the suggestion forthwith. He despatched to his junior the very pick of his fleet, eleven ships of the line, under officers of the boldest and ablest type, men whom Nelson afterwards called his "band of brothers," from the ardour with which they sank all personal prepossessions and served the national cause.

The squadron, which did not effect its concentration until June 7, was far more formidable than would at first sight appear from its numbers. It was composed of thirteen 74-gun ships of the line, one 50-gun ship, and one sloop. The ships included were not all that could be desired; the hulls of two were in a defective state; the others were short of stores, and a French prisoner speaks of Nelson's squadron as being "very badly equipped, alike in the matter of naval stores and provisions; their rigging was as old as could be." But the crews had been trained and disciplined under St Vincent; great attention had been paid to gunnery; and the manoeuvring was of the smartest. To serve under St Vincent was regarded by competent and ambitious men as the swiftest road to promotion, because, though he was arbitrary and imperious by nature, exacting the most implicit obedience and mercilessly punishing incompetence and inefficiency, he was quick to discern and reward merit. It was indeed from his fleet that most of the officers who covered themselves with glory in this war proceeded. Nelson, then, owed much to his commander-in-chief; yet he was himself precisely the man who could make the best use of the opportunities offered him; and, burning with zeal himself, his example inspired the same spirit in others.

His instructions, conceived in the most stirring terms, directed him to follow the Toulon fleet wherever it went and to destroy it. He was to compel neutrals to give him supplies, should compulsion be required, and was to be prepared to take great risks. His own spirit was so confident of success that he declared to one of his captains that not one of the French should escape—and this although he believed the enemy to be 15 sail of the line strong. Since Naples and Sicily were mentioned first in his letter of instructions as the probable destination of the enemy, he moved to Naples, and on the way received definite information that the French fleet had been seen off the south coast of Sicily on June 4. Through the intervention of the British Minister at Naples, Sir William Hamilton, secret orders were sent to the Neapolitan authorities in Sicily to grant Nelson supplies. Off Sicily on June 22 he learnt from a neutral that Malta had already fallen, and that the French fleet had sailed eastwards on June 16. This news was false, as the French were at Malta till the night of the 18th, but in the absence of numerous frigates, for which he and his commander-in-chief had repeatedly applied, he could do nothing to verify it. In vain had St Vincent informed the Admiralty in May that "less than 20 efficient frigates will not be sufficient

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for the extensive prospective operations." He acted upon the supposition that the information was possibly true, and at once decided to sail with all speed to Egypt, which his information seemed now to indicate as the final destination of the French.

By a singular chance vessels of the French squadron were sighted by his force that very day, June 22. Two French frigates were seen from the deck of one of the British vessels and a line of battleship from another; but the want of cruisers prevented proper reconnaissance and examination of these strangers, though Nelson had expected to meet and destroy the French at sea on this very day and in this place. After the information he had received, he did not like to take the risk of scattering his battleships in a general chase. That night there was a mist, and the British ships exchanged gun signals. So close were the two forces that the French heard the reports of these guns plainly, and headed northwards, away from the British, when the danger to them for the moment passed. Their strength was 13 ships of the line: one of 120 guns, three of 80 guns, and the rest of 74 guns, with 7 cruisers, 26 smaller armed ships, and 318 vessels, laden with 38,000 troops, 171 guns, and stores. They were under the supreme command of Bonaparte, under whom was Admiral Brueys, in charge of the naval force. The war-ships were encumbered with men and stores, the 74s having each over 350 troops on board; the crews were in great part composed of pressed men who detested the service and were not broken to discipline. One reason, indeed, for placing so many soldiers in the fighting ships was to find substitutes for seamen, who were not to be obtained by hook or by crook; another reason was to provide a force capable of compelling the half-mutinous crews to fight. In the past Brueys had had repeatedly to deplore the want of obedience on board, the readiness of the men to leave their posts in action, and the utter impossibility of enforcing discipline when all offences had to be tried by jury; and, although on the eve of the departure the jury system had been abolished, its effects lived after it. It did not improve matters that the pay was heavily in arrears, which was certainly one explanation of the shortage of 2049 seamen in the fighting squadron, while rations were not always issued regularly. The country round Toulon, before the start, had been filled with deserters from both the army and the fleet.

The *matériel* of the fleet was no better than the *personnel*. Three of the 74s were old and rotten—one so rotten that she had proved unable to carry the ordinary battery of a French 74, and had had her armament reduced in consequence. Another 74, though not quite so bad, was unfit for hard service. All the ships were short of marine stores, owing to the economic straits to which the financial disorganisation produced by the Revolution had reduced France. They were most inadequately provisioned for such an expedition as that which they were undertaking; for though orders had been issued that three months' food

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and water should be embarked there were few of the ships which actually received such an allowance on board. This defective equipment had a fatal influence at every turn upon the military efficiency of Brueys' fleet. Cables, anchors, spars, sails, all were of poor quality or worn ; and this was all the more serious since, from the want of skilled seamen and officers of naval experience, it would be difficult to make such repairs as Nelson's *Vanguard* effected in a few days.

The senior officers of the French navy do not appear to have been consulted in framing the general plan, though it is difficult to say whether at the start they realised the danger to which they were to expose themselves. If the British fleet were encountered at sea, the orders issued in the French fleet were to use every effort to close and board, when it was hoped that the large number of troops carried would procure success. It was not known as yet that any considerable British force was inside the Straits of Gibraltar ; at the most Nelson was supposed to have with him six or seven ships, of small size. There can be but little doubt that, had the two forces met, the result would have been a disaster for the French, seeing that they had not seamen enough both to manœuvre their ships and to work their guns, while, as Marmont says in his memoirs, the fleet was so badly equipped, the crews were so weak and so devoid of training, and the batteries so encumbered with stores, that everything was risked on the throw of the dice. The progress of the flotilla was intolerably slow, averaging less than 50 miles a day, though this very defect saved it from destruction on the voyage. It arrived off Malta on June 9 ; and, owing mainly to treachery, the place fell without any serious resistance. On the 19th the expedition made sail for Egypt, and, after seeing far off in the haze of a summer day some British ships (which however seemed to the French not to be eager to bring on a battle) arrived off Alexandria without misadventure. As the topmasts of the French cruiser *Junon* in advance of the fleet rose to the west, those of Nelson's fleet dropped below the horizon to the east. Thus a second time the French fleet had had the narrowest of escapes. If only a supply of cruisers had accompanied Nelson's fleet, nothing could have saved Bonaparte, for it is certain that in such circumstances the British admiral would have left a frigate to keep watch for his enemy. As it was, he was completely deceived by the tardiness with which the French had accomplished their voyage, and now came to the conclusion that they must have struck at either Syria or the Dardanelles. Without a moment's delay he decided to sail to Alexandretta ; thither he stood and found no trace of the French ; it was the same at Candia ; and on July 19, disconsolate and baffled, he was back at Syracuse for the purpose of reprovisioning and watering his ships.

Indomitable as had been his energy, his mental suffering at his want of success was acute. He was perfectly aware of the issues which

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hung upon the defeat of the French; and he well knew the storm of criticism which would break upon the head of his commander-in-chief if he, a young *protégé*, proved a failure on his first great mission. In England he was already being censured for remissness and incompetence. He sailed again for the East on July 25, having now received intelligence which satisfied him that, wherever the French had gone, they were not to the west of him. Running up to the Morea, he gained information that the enemy had sailed to Alexandria, and instantly headed for that port. His fleet was ready to fight at a moment's notice; daily the crews were exercised with great guns and small arms; all his plans were prepared; in calms it was his custom to meet his captains in conference, and with them discuss his battle tactics. Though there has been great controversy on the question to whom must be ascribed the credit of the plan adopted in the now impending battle, the central idea was indubitably Nelson's. It was to concentrate an overwhelming force upon a detail of the enemy's fleet, supposing that fleet were found at anchor; and the statements of Saumarez show that the plan of doubling on the enemy, by engaging the hostile ships on both broadsides, was among the proposals discussed in Nelson's conferences with his captains.

Meantime the French army had disembarked, not without encountering considerable difficulties in the operation, and was marching on Cairo. If a document in the correspondence of Napoleon can be believed, Brueys was ordered by his commander-in-chief either to move his fleet into the harbour of Alexandria, or to take up a defensible position in Aboukir Bay, or, if this were impossible, to sail to Corfu. There is, however, reason to regard this order as a deliberate forgery intended to save the reputation of Napoleon. All the trustworthy documents which remain—for in the later years of the Empire there was a wholesale destruction of papers and orders—indicate that Brueys had received definite instructions not to leave Egypt, though he himself was aware that the only prudent course was to return to Toulon. The moral support of the fleet was necessary to the French army, while there was always a possibility of a hurried withdrawal of that army being necessitated by a defeat. Moreover Bonaparte at the outset hoped to be able to return to France in a few weeks after his landing, and resume the direction of the plans for the invasion of England. It is thus evident that the story of Brueys having been ordered to Corfu must be dismissed as a mere fable. To move the fleet into the harbour at Alexandria was found impracticable, owing to the insufficient depth of water in the channels giving entrance to that haven. The battleships would need to be lightened, and only two could be moved into the harbour each day. If the British appeared while the fleet was in the act of moving in, it would clearly be liable to be taken in detail and destroyed. As the result of the lack of supplies in Egypt, heavy demands were made by the army upon the stores carried in the fleet; and quite early in July the want of rations made it impossible

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for Brueys to sail either to Corfu or France. Finally the fleet anchored in Aboukir Bay (July 7), worse supplied than ever with seamen, since many had been detached for service with the French flotilla on the Nile and for various shore duties; so short of rations that the crews on board were in danger of starvation, and in a position which was from the military point of view indefensible. The food which remained on board was diminishing by daily consumption, and even water was only to be obtained with infinite difficulty and in insufficient quantity, till, as Brueys wrote a week before the battle, "the fleet is on the verge of perishing of hunger and thirst." Officers and men, without pay or other money, were living from hand to mouth.

The French battleships were anchored in a single line a mile and three-quarters long, the bearing of which was north-north-west and south-south-east. There was a slight bend in the centre. The weakest ships were at the head of the line, and some support was given by a second and inner line of four frigates and three small craft. The first ship in the line of battleships was distant no less than 3200 yards from Aboukir Island, where was a battery of two mortars, and 6000 yards from the mainland at Aboukir Point, where was a feebly armed fort. The depth of water in which the French were moored was 7 fathoms; for, although Brueys had ordered that the head of the line should anchor in 5 fathoms, he had been disobeyed by the captain of the *Guerrier*, a fact which illustrates the bad discipline of the fleet and the untrustworthiness of its officers. For some hundreds of yards the water inside the line and between it and the shore was deep enough for ships of the line to manœuvre. Brueys' attention had been called to the weakness of his dispositions; and a plan had been suggested to him which would have brought the line closer to the shore, and at the same time have permitted the various ships in it to support one another better. But for some reason or other he made no change; he appears to have feared for his rear and centre rather than his van; perhaps, also, he was lulled to a fatal security by the fact that a French frigate had grounded on entering the bay, and had only been got off with extreme difficulty. He had definitively determined to fight at anchor, as he had not enough seamen to manœuvre at sea, or indeed supplies of food and water for a cruise of more than a few hours. He was in this posture when at 2 p.m. on August 1 the signal was made that twelve ships were approaching. They were speedily made out to be enemies; the French boat-parties engaged in obtaining provisions, water, and fuel, were recalled; and at 3 orders were issued to prepare for battle.

For a moment Brueys seems to have thought of fighting under sail, notwithstanding his previous dispositions. He signalled to bend topsails, but a few minutes later annulled the order and directed his fleet to fight at its moorings. This unexpected change was due to the remonstrances of two of his officers, who went on board the flagship as

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the British were in the act of closing. Another order directed every ship to pass a hawser to the next ship astern and to fasten to this hawser a warp so as to be able to turn the ship, if required, and bring her broadside to bear against the enemy. A second anchor was to be laid out to the south-west. Had these measures been carried out, without greatly improving the military position, they would have rendered it even more difficult than it actually was for the French ships to get under way; but, owing to the absence of many boats and the fact that the crews were actively employed in clearing the ships and preparing for battle, they do not seem to have been executed. Brueys thought that Nelson would not attack that day, as the hour was already late, and the difficulties of a night action for the British, in waters which they had not surveyed, would be enormous.

The wind blew north-north-west as the British bore down. Soon after the enemy were sighted, Nelson made the signal to prepare for battle, and followed this up, as soon as he could see the exact position of the French, with orders to prepare to anchor by the stern, with springs upon the cable. Half-an-hour later, the portion of the enemy's force upon which the concentration was to be effected was indicated in the signal, "Attack enemy's van and centre." As the wind was blowing down the French line, this disposition would enable the British ships anchored about the French van to move down by paying out cable, while the French ships at the rear of the line, tied up with anchors, hawsers, and warps and with the wind dead against them, would be almost helpless to intervene. Up to this point the British fleet had been in no order; to the French, indeed, it seemed, as years afterwards at Trafalgar, that the approach was being made in confusion. But now the signal to form line of battle went up, and with a rapidity and precision that drew admiration from the French officers, eleven British ships formed into line. Three others were at some distance, and had not as yet been able to join the squadron. The line, however, could not, even at this point, have been a precise one, since the two leading British ships ran a glorious race to decide which should be the first into battle. Foley, who commanded the winner in this race, as he neared the *Guerrier*, the head ship in the French line, looked for her anchor-buoy, and saw at once that he had ample room to steer inside his enemy. Inside he came, as the enemy's guns opened a steady fire, and, as Nelson's last signal, "Engage more closely," floated to the yards, delivered a terrible broadside into the *Guerrier*, came-to with his anchor astern, and, as this did not bring him up smartly, drifted down to the second French ship, the *Conquérant*, and poured into her a not less terrible fire.

The French seem to have been taken completely by surprise by this manœuvre. There is some evidence to show that on the shore side their batteries were not clear for action, but were lumbered up with boxes and all kinds of *impedimenta*. That they should not have cleared on the

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inshore side was natural enough, as they persistently underrated the risk of the British fleet doubling upon them. It is certain that the British ships which anchored inshore suffered very little loss, probably because of this fact. The second British ship, the *Zealous*, followed Foley and anchored opposite to the leading Frenchman, inshore of him. Three other of Nelson's ships did the same; the rest of the British fleet engaged on the seaward side. In the first phase of the battle eight British ships were concentrated upon the leading six of Brueys, the British captains for the most part so placing their commands as to bring a raking fire to bear on the enemy. The artillery duel was at first well sustained by the French, though their fire was far slower than that of the British ships. But the concentration speedily began to tell, even though from time to time the British ships had to hold their fire for fear of injuring one another, as night was now falling, and the whole of the bay was wrapped in dense clouds of smoke.

The two leading ships in the French fleet suffered grievously under the British fire. The *Guerrier's* foremast fell in seven minutes amidst a round of cheers from the British fleet; in twenty minutes all three masts were down. Her rotten timber flew in showers of splinters; immense gaps showed where portholes had been; most of her guns were put out of action; and about 8.30 p.m. or a little later she struck. She had been reduced to such a state that she had scarcely been able to fire a shot for an hour. The *Conquérant* succumbed a little earlier. The third ship, the *Spartiate*, was now assailed not only by the British vessels which had attacked the leaders in the line, but also by Nelson's flagship, the *Vanguard*. Yet, though little more than a floating target, and now torn by the concentrated fire of four British ships, the *Spartiate* held out till after 9.30 p.m. and only struck when two-fifths of her crew were *hors de combat*, and her hull pierced by 76 shots below the water-line. The fourth enemy, the *Aquilon*, lost her captain early in the fight, and saw the next astern, the *Peuple Souverain*, drift away through the severance of her cables. She struck in a terrible plight shortly before 10 p.m. The *Peuple Souverain* received a raking fire from the *Orion*, and was engaged broadside to broadside by the *Defence*; she was speedily reduced to a wreck, driven from the line, and compelled to strike her flag. So far the battle had gone most favourably for the British, but lower down the French line a disaster had been narrowly averted. The last two ships in the British line — the *Majestic* and the *Bellerophon*, for the *Culloden* had run ashore and was out of the fight, with the 50-gun *Leander* standing by her — in the confusion, darkness, and smoke pushed too far down the enemy's line, and had to fight away from support. Of these two, the *Bellerophon* engaged the huge *Orient* of quite double her force, and was most severely handled; all her three masts came down, and there is evidence to show that about the time the *Orient* took fire the *Bellerophon* cut her cable and withdrew from the

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battle in some disorder. The *Majestic*, which had joined in the attack on the *Orient*, was also beaten off and forced down the line, where she engaged the *Heureux*. The crisis of the fight had now arrived; but, just when aid was most needed the *Swiftsure*, *Alexander*, and *Leander*, with several of the ships which had already crushed the French van, arrived to co-operate in the final attack on the French centre.

The most formidable ships in the centre were the 80-gun *Franklin* and the 120 *Orient*, astern of which again was another 80, the *Tonnant*. Six British vessels were now firing into them. About 9 p.m. three boats caught fire, but were cut away, on board the great *Orient*; a few minutes later a fire broke out on the poop, but had only attacked some heaps of splinters and rubbish when it was put out. It reappeared ten minutes later in the mizzen-channels, and speedily obtained a fatal hold on the ship, running up the rigging and along the deck with the speed of lightning. The British fire prevented the crew from extinguishing it, and shattered the fire-engines and the buckets which had been placed in readiness for any emergency. Already Brueys had been killed, and the French flagship was in terrible disorder, her decks covered with killed and wounded. A little after 10 the flames reached the middle deck and the order was given to the crew to save themselves; the wounded had to be abandoned to their fate. At 10.15, by French time, the *Orient* blew up with a fearful uproar, which seemed to stun the combatants. Blazing wreckage fell on the British *Alexander*, but the fires which it started were put out. For more than ten minutes dead silence followed; then a French ship took up the battle and the cannonade was resumed, continuing thenceforth spasmodically till daylight, when it again became fierce as the French rear was assailed. By this time only two French ships of the line, the *Tell* and the *Généreux*, and one frigate, were in a seaworthy condition. These spread sail and took to flight; the other ten French ships were burnt or captured. Early in the fight Nelson had received a severe wound; and in the concluding stage of the action the want of his controlling hand was sorely felt. Had he remained unhurt it is certain that not one of the enemy's ships would have escaped him. As it was, his order to pursue and capture the remnant of the French fleet was not properly carried out.

In numbers engaged the two fleets were equal, whether ships or men be reckoned. But in weight of metal the French had a greater advantage, as their ships threw from the broadside 13,880 lbs., as against the British 11,330. Yet, as the French lacked the men to work the guns, this preponderance was not of much service to them. Of the fourteen British ships of the line one took no part in the action. The other thirteen included one 50-gun ship, a very weak vessel. The French loss, though never exactly ascertained, is placed at 1700 killed and drowned, while 350 who escaped ashore were killed by Arabs. The wounded numbered 1479; and more than 2000 unwounded prisoners were taken

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by the British and released, as there were no supplies for them, while it was an additional argument for their release that if placed ashore they would be a serious embarrassment to Bonaparte's commissariat.

The battle was really the decisive naval engagement of the whole struggle with France from 1793 to 1815. The vigour and boldness of Nelson's tactics and his complete and appalling success destroyed all feeling of confidence in the French navy. In most of the French ships there was no want of bravery, whatever the lack of discipline and skill. The men fought and died like heroes; captain after captain refused to be taken below when badly wounded; and, though a French captain complains of "the cowardice of many officers and of the greater part of the crews," under such demoralising circumstances in a fleet exposed to such an attack it was not to be expected that there would be no signs of weakness. The officers were indeed the picked men of their service; they had the advantage in force and they knew it. It was the first time within the memory of living man that such a victory had been won against odds. Neither the First of June, nor St Vincent, nor Camperdown, could compare in results with this action. For here it might truly be said that the ideal of "not victory, but annihilation" had been attained by the British. Beyond question the greatness of the success was due to Nelson; it stamped his capacity as a fighting seaman, and proved that at least on the sea England could oppose to the French a leader in judgment, energy and decision the equal of Bonaparte himself. No other such victory was gained in the seventeen years of war which were still to follow, except by Nelson; yet other British admirals had opportunities not less magnificent, and he had shown them the way.

The destruction of the French fleet had for the moment a serious moral effect on the French army, which it left isolated from France and unable to communicate except with the greatest difficulty with that country. Its capture or destruction was only a question of time, in view of the vigorous naval blockade which the British were able to impose. Nelson at once returned to Naples, obeying his orders to protect that kingdom; but he left behind him a force ample to watch the Egyptian ports, which promptly put a stop to all commerce and hindered French communications along the coast. In 1799 Sir Sidney Smith was appointed to the command of this detached force, and rendered the utmost service to the Turks in Syria, not only by intercepting the French battering train, but also by landing seamen and guns at Acre. The resistance thus opposed at Acre to Bonaparte prevented him from undertaking further schemes of conquest in Asia Minor.

Meantime the British in the Mediterranean, reinforced by the alliance of the Portuguese, Neapolitan, Russian, and Turkish navies — not that any of these forces counted very seriously in the scale — had blockaded Malta, which place did not, however, surrender until September 5, 1800, after both the French battleships which had escaped from Aboukir

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Bay had fallen into the hands of the British navy. In November, 1798, a squadron detached from St Vincent's fleet had taken possession of Minorca. The French government, in face of its growing difficulties at home and abroad, took steps in 1799 to withdraw Bonaparte and his army from Egypt. In April, Bruix with 25 French ships of the line slipped out of Brest, owing in part to the slackness of the British blockade, in part to the anxiety of the British admiral to cover Ireland; he pushed south, entered the Mediterranean, and placed himself with greatly superior forces between the scattered detachments of the British fleet. It looked as if the game was in his hands, but his ships were so badly equipped and his captains such bad seamen that he could not trust them in action; the gunnery of his men was so deplorable that they could not in a thousand rounds once hit a corsair, at which the whole fleet fired. Bruix steered to Toulon; and his mere appearance compelled the British to withdraw from before Malta, and enabled the French to throw supplies into that island. Owing to the state of his ships he did not venture to move to Egypt; and his skilfully planned combinations failed, no doubt because he feared to suffer the fate which had befallen Brueys, and because he was aware that, as soon as they learned definitely the direction of his movement, the British would follow him in superior force. He left Toulon on his return voyage with 22 ships; sailed to Carthagena, where he picked up a Spanish squadron; and then with a fleet 40 ships strong, returned to the Atlantic, having accomplished nothing, though he had caused the British government some moments of acute anxiety. He had purposed on leaving the Mediterranean to cruise off Madeira, intending as soon as the British fleets had dispersed in quest of him to return to the Mediterranean. This would have been a clever and puzzling combination for the British; but owing to the ill-will of the Spaniards and the wretched condition of their ships he was obliged to renounce this part of his scheme and to sail for Brest, taking the Spaniards with him. If useless for any other purpose they at least served as hostages.

During Nelson's operations in the Mediterranean the British fleet blockading Cadiz had been exposed to serious dangers from within. A plot had been hatched by the United Irishmen in the ships to seize the fleet. Unlike the mutinies of 1797 this was a revolutionary movement, instigated by the corresponding societies in England and led by a man named Bott, who had entered the navy for the express purpose of sapping its loyalty. If the confessions of the ringleaders can be trusted, it was intended to kill the leading officers, and then either to push up the Mediterranean and bring over Nelson's ships, or to sail for Ireland, where a formidable insurrection had already broken out. The plot was, however, detected in June, 1798, and the conspirators were seized, tried by court-martial, and condignly punished. It had been openly said by them that the Mediterranean fleet would be as bad as the

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fleet at the Nore had been in 1797. There are traces of a similar political plot in the Channel fleet at this date; but in that case the conspiracy was thwarted by the bold action of Captain Pellew. The existence of such disaffection, however, illustrates the difficulties with which the officers of the British navy had to grapple, and shows that, if much fault was to be found with the seamen supplied to the French navy, the raw material of the British navy was not very much better. No evidence has as yet been found to prove that the French government had a hand in these plots, yet there is intrinsic probability in the belief that it abetted them.

When Bruix' fleet turned northwards to Toulon, the British squadron under Nelson returned to Naples from Palermo, where it had been protecting the Neapolitan royal family. In Naples, during the absence of the British fleet, a revolutionary movement had broken out, led by the best men in the country and encouraged by the French. The revolutionists, however, had been attacked by a motley force of royalists, under Cardinal Ruffo, assisted by small detachments of Russian and Turkish troops, and had been driven into the forts at Naples and compelled to surrender, on June 23, 1799, on terms which granted immunity to all who had participated in the revolutionary movement, or, if they desired it, a safe-conduct to Toulon. Ruffo throughout held that the insurgents had been as much sinned against as sinning, and had told his Court with great common-sense that "a few bombs and a general pardon will end the business." But on June 24, after the capitulation had been concluded and signed by the British naval officer in command in the Bay of Naples, as well as by Cardinal Ruffo and the Russian and Turkish commanders, though before it had been completely executed, Nelson appeared with his ships. He had been entrusted by the Neapolitan Court with authority over Cardinal Ruffo, and disapproved of the Cardinal's leaning to merciful treatment of the republicans. He pointed out that Ruffo had disobeyed instructions from the King of Naples in granting lenient terms to the insurgents, and announced his determination to annul the capitulation. A stormy interview between Nelson and Ruffo took place, in which Ruffo, though supported by protests from the Russian and Turkish commanders, failed to carry his point, or to obtain Nelson's sanction for a policy which was both humane and statesmanlike. But at this moment in his career Nelson was suffering physically and mentally from the strain of the Nile campaign; and his usual sane judgment was dominated by the influence of the British Minister at the Neapolitan Court, Sir William Hamilton, and his wife, whose conduct was inspired in part by anxiety to bind the Queen of Naples to England, and in part by what appears to have been personal jealousy of Ruffo. Unquestionably the Neapolitan royal family had rendered valuable services to Nelson and to the British cause, and this fact may have contributed to blind his judgment. But the best way

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of repaying these services was not to support measures which could only provoke a violent reaction. Finally, after much talk, the insurgents were informed of Nelson's determination to disregard the capitulation, though there is reason to think that this intimation was couched in ambiguous terms, and that treachery was shown in some quarter, either by Hamilton, whose mistakes in his despatches covering these incidents are such as to provoke some suspicion, or more probably by Ruffo, in order to regain credit with his Court when he found that no efforts on his part could move Nelson. Be this as it may, the insurgents came out; the forts were delivered up; and the garrison and persons implicated were placed on board the transports.

Among the insurgents had been a distinguished Neapolitan officer, Prince Caracciolo, who, after serving in the royal navy of Naples, had more or less reluctantly espoused the cause of the revolutionary government, and had fled from the forts before the capitulation was concluded. He was therefore in no sense covered by its terms. Captured in disguise, he was brought in chains to Nelson's flagship, and at Nelson's order was immediately tried by a court-martial of Neapolitan officers convened on board the British flagship and found guilty of high treason. The sentence of death was carried out with extreme and unnecessary haste. Nor was this the last of the unfortunate incidents at Naples. The prisoners seized in the transports under such painful circumstances, were handed over by the British admiral to the mercy of the Neapolitan Court, which was as cruel as it was cowardly; and they, though for the most part men of high character, were put to death by the royal executioners and by the mob of Naples. A spirit of extreme ferocity indeed seems to brood over all the actions of the British navy in the Bay of Naples, so that we find the gallant and able Troubridge even before this affair of the capitulation jesting in a letter to Nelson over the offering of a "Jacobin's head," and Nelson passing on the remark to Lord St Vincent, as a capital joke. There was no concern as to the guilt of the man killed, though it is now known that the so-called Jacobin was innocent and had been faithful to the royal cause. When Lord Keith, Nelson's superior in command on the Mediterranean station, heard from Nelson's despatches of these proceedings, he at once ordered Nelson to use his influence to moderate the savagery of the Neapolitan Court. There is no evidence to prove that Nelson did so. Nor were these incidents without effect on national interests and on his own career. There is some reason to think that distrust of his judgment engendered by his supposed subservience to the Neapolitan Court led the Admiralty to pass him over when a successor was being appointed to Lord St Vincent in the Mediterranean command, though he was incomparably the ablest and greatest officer of his day, and was by the general consent of later critics the man best fitted for the post.

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CHAPTER XXI

THE SECOND COALITION

As in the case of the Egyptian expedition, so too in that of the French conquest of Italy, a sudden falling off of interest is observable among the actors directly concerned, after the departure of the protagonist from the scenes which he had made peculiarly his own. As the plans of these enterprises were due to the foresight of Bonaparte, so also his masterful energy drove them forward with a force that none of his lieutenants could hope to rival. But there is this difference between the two cases. Whereas the Egyptian expedition after the withdrawal of the commander-in-chief resembled a spent ball that turns and wavers until it comes to rest, the French conquest of Italy, on the other hand, was pushed on to further lengths by men whose abilities both in statecraft and in strategy were too weak to grapple with the difficulties into which their revolutionary zeal or personal ambition had led them. In truth, the seeds of future strife were scattered abroad before Bonaparte set sail for the East; and we must therefore begin our review of the causes that led to the war of the Second Coalition by noticing first the weakness of the European system, and secondly the events which brought it once more into collision with Revolutionary France.

It is difficult now to realise the helplessness of the old monarchies in the period that followed the Treaty of Campo Formio. That compact dealt a fatal blow to the traditional order of things in Italy and Germany. The partition of the Venetian lands and the erection of the Cisalpine and Ligurian Republics inevitably led to other changes in Italy. Despite the article which guaranteed the independence of those States, France continued to control the resources of northern Italy; her troops overawed the King of Sardinia, and the French garrison at Ancona sought to revolutionise that city as a means of undermining the power of the Pope. With Ancona and Corfu as naval bases, she controlled the Adriatic and threatened Austrian commerce.

The influence of that treaty on German affairs was also disastrous. In the secret articles Austria promised to help France to acquire the Rhine boundary, she herself gaining Salzburg and a part of the east of

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Bavaria. Thus the Emperor, the official champion of Germany, and the hereditary guardian of the Church, had secretly agreed to French encroachments, provided that Austria gained part of Bavaria and despoiled an Archbishop. In pursuance of these secret terms, the Republican troops advanced at the close of the year and held all the important points on the left bank of the Rhine, thus exercising at the Congress of Rastatt, now called to arrange peace between France and the Empire, a material pressure which redoubled the power of French diplomacy. As will shortly appear, the scarcely veiled hostility of Austria and Prussia left Germany helpless. Furthermore, these States were weak in all that makes for moral force. The material exhaustion of the Habsburg Power was not so serious as to be beyond the power of statesmen speedily to repair; but the narrowness of mind and infirmity of purpose of its ruler, Francis II, forbade any hope of those drastic reforms in the army and the public service which the Archduke Charles and others saw to be necessary. The Foreign Minister, Thugut, whose courage and tenacity gave some dignity to an otherwise coarse and limited nature, still sought to show a bold front to French aggressions; but he was thwarted at every turn by intriguing coteries that made his position almost unbearable; and the rusty governmental machine clanked along in the old grooves, to the despair of friends and the derision of foes.

Over against this patriarchal and morally bankrupt organism stood that of Prussia, smaller, less imposing, but more compact, still enjoying much of the military prestige bequeathed by the great Frederick and now relieved of the worst burdens of favouritism, extravagance, and moral disgrace, that had clung about his successor. Frederick William II died in November, 1797, and was succeeded by his son of the same name, a young man of twenty-seven, whose strictly moral life and honesty of purpose promised better things. Some moral improvement may be credited to the young King and to his consort, the beautiful Queen Louisa; but the evils of Prussian policy continued unchanged. The annals of Prussia as well as the earlier misfortunes of France showed that public affairs could not be set right without the exercise of governing gifts that neither Louis XVI nor Frederick William III possessed. Neither of these young rulers possessed the requisite knowledge of men and affairs, or had any opportunity of enlarging the narrow outlook on life due to their secluded upbringing. Worst of all, the King of Prussia was beset by the same indecision that crippled the reforming efforts of his French prototype. Externally, he seemed to hold a position of great power. By the Treaty of Basel (April 5, 1795) his predecessor had made peace with France, giving up to the Republic his trans-Rhenane lands, binding the other States of North and Central Germany to neutrality during the remainder of the war with France, and secretly securing the reversion of the Bishopric of Münster. Neutrality was to be enforced in the case of Hanover, if necessary, by a Prussian occupation.

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This act of subservience left Prussia free to throw her whole weight into Polish affairs, and she received her recompense at the Third Partition of Poland. But the material gains (immediate and prospective) were purchased by a loss of prestige; and it was now incumbent on the new ruler to abandon the rôle of time-serving dependence on France into which the policy of the Foreign Minister, Haugwitz, had betrayed the kingdom. Nevertheless, Frederick William III wholly failed to rise to a true sense of the duty of Prussia towards Germany. The wish for peace with France and the hope of rounding off his lands in the west by gains at the expense of Austria and the ecclesiastical States blinded him to the risks which this policy involved; and Prussia held to the easy and profitable course that was to lead her to Jena.

Russia was likewise an uncertain factor in European politics. The death of Catharine II in November, 1796, was a serious blow to the First Coalition. Her successor, Paul I, who came to the throne after a long period of disgrace and captivity, already gave signs of that eccentric and violent character which was by turns to amuse and exasperate the statesmen of Europe. For some months he seemed intent on reversing the policy of his mother alike in domestic and foreign affairs; but by degrees his feelings responded more and more to appeals made from Vienna and London to oppose the progress of the Republicans. He allowed "Louis XVIII" to settle at Mittau, where that hapless wanderer arrived in March, 1798. But he refused to see him at his capital; and it is doubtful whether he would have taken up arms against France had not Bonaparte's seizure of Malta thwarted his pet scheme of using the title of Protector of the Order of St John, recently bestowed on him by the Knights, as a means of securing that island for his Empire. In this, as in many other respects, the action of the great Corsican produced results which even he did not foresee. The Maltese grievance rankled deep in the soul of the northern autocrat, giving consistency to his otherwise wavering purposes, and leading him for a time so far to reverse the traditional Muscovite policy towards the Sultan as to bind Russia and Turkey in united action against the intrusive western Power that threatened to overturn the East.

As for Great Britain, there seemed in the early part of the year 1798 but the faintest chance that she would once more arouse the Continent against France. Her finances showed only a slight recovery from the recent monetary crisis. The alliance of France and Spain brought about the withdrawal of the British fleet from the Mediterranean in November, 1796; and the signs of rebellion fast gathering in Ireland foreshadowed the gravest of dangers, if the expeditions preparing in the northern ports of France should effect a landing. In one other respect the strife between Great Britain and France became embittered. On October 31, 1796, the Directory had promulgated a law excluding British goods from all lands over which France had control, and authorising

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their capture even on neutral ships. Cotton and woollen goods, together with hardware, pottery, and refined sugar, were to be considered as of British origin and their importation was forbidden under pain of confiscation. The execution of these measures, and the effort to impose them on Spain and Holland, produced the utmost degree of exasperation in England and served to give the war a national character which it had not at first possessed. Two alternatives were open: either to accept the terms which the Directory might see fit to dictate; or to attack France with yet greater vigour, in the hope that the results of the Treaty of Campo Formio would speedily become unbearable on the Continent. The latter course was adopted.

Even in France few believed that the peace with Austria would be lasting; witness the exclamation of Sieyès on hearing the terms: "This treaty is not a peace, it is the call to a new war." Equally prophetic was Bonaparte's utterance concerning the Directors on leaving Milan for Rastatt in November, 1797: "They will set Italy on fire and cause us to be chased out." The situation then existing in Italy was one of unstable equilibrium, the overgrown and aggressive power of France in the north having no counterpoise in the influence of Austria or of the States of the centre and south, which looked on the progress of the Revolution with a hatred scarcely curbed by a sense of their own weakness. The Directors were fully conscious alike of the hatred and the weakness; and the Jacobins called on them especially to stamp out the Papacy, and thus to complete the intellectual and political overturn. The Directors themselves were eager for the conquest of Rome, because it would yield a profitable return to the French treasury, then in sore straits owing to the failure of a projected loan. Their despatches to Bonaparte during his Italian campaign leave no doubt on these points.

That the young conqueror also cared nothing for the Holy See is clear from his curious suggestion of February 1, 1797, that the Directory should give Rome to Spain. For the time being, however, he did not seriously aim at the overthrow of the Temporal Power: first, because he was unwilling to figure as the declared foe of the Papacy, whose power over men's consciences he intended in the future to use, and secondly, because he saw the folly of plunging his army deep into "the boot" of Italy until peace could be arranged with Austria. As long as he could keep a French garrison at Ancona and set about the founding of a Republic at that valuable seaport, he was content with exercising a profitable pressure on the Vatican, extorting its jewels and its most precious works of art, and awaiting the decease of the feeble old Pope, Pius VI. After the *coup d'état* of 18 Fructidor (September 4, 1797) the Directory was more than ever hostile to the Pope; and Joseph Bonaparte, who succeeded Cacault as ambassador at Rome in the early summer of 1797, received instructions from his brother, dated September 29, 1797, to protest against the appointment of Provera as commander of the

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papal troops and to demand his dismissal within twenty-four hours. Bonaparte actually used the threatening phrase that this matter alone, if well managed, might lead to the ruin of the Court of Rome. He also suggested that if, on the death of the Pope, no popular rising took place, Joseph must at all costs prevent the election of Cardinal Albani, who was supposed to be guilty of the murder of Basseville, a secretary of the French embassy in Rome, in 1793. The Directory even added an order that on the death of Pius VI no other Pope was to be elected. On November 12, 1797, at the close of his stay in Italy, Bonaparte sent General Duphot to help Joseph in furthering the cause of the Roman democrats; and the French embassy in the Corsini palace became their rallying-point.

Knowing that the Directory eagerly desired an excuse for tearing up the Treaty of Tolentino, which it had always disapproved, the Roman malcontents now sought to provoke a collision as a necessary prelude to French intervention. On December 27, 1797, they assembled at the Villa Medici (the seat of the French Academy in Rome) and shouted for the Republic, until on the appearance of papal horsemen they took to flight, leaving behind a sack full of French tricolour cockades. Joseph Bonaparte at once disavowed all connexion with this affair. On the next day the democrats crowded to the French embassy; and, as before, a detachment of cavalry rode up to disperse them. Several of the democrats rushed for safety into the courtyard of the embassy, whereupon Duphot ran down with drawn sword to act as peacemaker, as Joseph Bonaparte stated in his not very convincing report; or, as the clerical version ran, to head them in their attack on the soldiers outside. Rushing into the street, he was mortally wounded by the firing of the *Papalini*, which nearly cost the life of the ambassador himself, as Joseph Bonaparte avers. The ambassador now refused to hear the explanations and apologies of the Vatican and left Rome early on the following morning. How far the responsibility for this outrage should be allotted to the Roman Jacobins, the alleged secret plotters of the Vatican, or the wire-pullers of the French government, is even now matter of doubt. Evidently hostilities were thenceforth inevitable, and in these France had much to gain and Rome everything to lose. Berthier forthwith received orders to march on Rome; and, with a force of French veterans and Polish volunteers, he soon appeared before the walls. No defence being attempted, he occupied the Castle of St Angelo until the democrats gained the ascendant inside the city. On February 15 they assembled in the ancient Forum, declared for the restoration of the Roman Republic, and elected seven Consuls. Then, on their invitation, Berthier entered Rome and saluted the young Republic on the Capitol in the name of France. The Pope was thereupon insulted in his palace because he refused to leave Rome; his pastoral staff and even a ring from his finger were snatched from him by the brutal French commissioner, Haller, who forthwith ordered him into a carriage that drove away towards the confines of Tuscany. There his enfeebled frame

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found quiet for a space among the Augustinians of Siena; but a year later he was removed thence by order of the Directory amidst ever-increasing indignities to his last abode, Valence, in the south of France.

Thus fell the Temporal Power, almost without a struggle, and yet in a manner that awakened pity for the Papacy in the breasts of many who had hitherto worked for its overthrow. Among the many mistakes of the Revolutionary rulers of France, assuredly not the least was that of heaping contumely on the octogenarian Pontiff who had consistently offered a passive resistance to their threats, extortions, and intrigues. The feelings of sympathy with Pius VI were strengthened by a comparison of his mild and cultured sovereignty with the scenes of vandalism that ensued under the rule of the liberators. While a constitution of the French type took form under the nominal sway of the Roman Consuls, it soon appeared that the *raison d'être* of the young Roman Republic was to be found in the financial needs of France and of the Army of Italy. One of the French commissioners wrote the following frank avowal of his views of the situation: "The Revolution at Rome has not yet been productive enough. The only course to take, so as to derive from it a more suitable return, is to consider and to treat the finances of the Roman State as the finances of the French army." This course of conduct found general approval among officers and commissioners. The Vatican was stripped bare of its priceless treasures of art; and the palaces of the Roman nobility underwent the same fate, except where the owners offered ransoms sufficient to tempt the cupidity of the plunderers. The secret influence that prompted these actions stands revealed in the letter which Berthier wrote to Bonaparte, on receipt of the order to march to Rome:—"In sending me to Rome you appoint me treasurer to the chest of the Army of England."

Immediately before Berthier's return to the north of Italy, and after the arrival of his successor, Masséna, a remarkable mutiny took place among the French troops at Rome. Stung by the contrast between their own ill-paid, half-starving condition and the luxury of the chief civil and military marauders, the subalterns and rank and file drew up vehement protests, first against Berthier, and then, when he weakly humoured the petitioners, against his less pliable and, as it seems, less culpable successor. Finding his orders defied, Masséna handed over the command to Dallemagne and left the city. At sight of this mutiny the working-men of the Transtiberine quarter flew to arms and sought to drive out the French. They were crushed (February 24, 1798), as was a rising of the peasantry around Albano; but it was long before Dallemagne and his successor St Cyr brought the men to obedience and put down their "directing committee" in the garrison. In April and July further futile risings took place in Umbria and the Campagna. The immediate results, then, of the French occupation of Rome were the extraction of some 60,000,000 francs besides countless works of art and valuables, while on

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the other hand the discipline of the army and the reputation of its leaders were impaired, and their liberators became odious both to populace and peasantry.

The indignation in northern Italy was equally great. There the national sentiment, gathering strength month by month, resented the French exactions, which seemed to be the chief practical result of deliverance from the Austrian yoke. The Councils of the Cisalpine Republic refused to ratify a treaty forced on their envoy at Paris on February 22, 1798, under which the Republic would have not only to support 25,000 French troops and 22,000 Cisalpines, but also to subscribe to the war loan of the Directory, link itself closely with France in industrial affairs, and subordinate its foreign policy to that of the great Republic. By a display of armed force Berthier thereupon "purged" the Councils of the *Italianissime*, and the treaty was passed (March 20). Thus was the independence of the Cisalpine Republic, as guaranteed by the Treaty of Campo Formio, practically annulled. It is not surprising that the Emperor Francis thereafter refused to recognise the envoy of the Republic at Vienna, on the ground that the State which he represented was a vassal to France.

Even more disastrous to the good fame of the French Republic was the occupation of Switzerland. There the French ambassador, Barthélemy, had for five years by his wisdom and moderation kept the Cantons free from war and internal strife. But his work was now to be reversed by influences of a sinister character. Bonaparte, in passing from Milan to Rastatt in November, 1797, noted the schisms that were developing in that land, and encouraged the democrats to further action. At Basel he had an interview with their leader, Ochs; and a scheme of action seems to have been arranged, Ochs stirring up the north, while Mengaud, La Harpe, and others, worked in the Pays de Vaud. On arriving at Paris, Bonaparte threw in his influence in favour of French intervention in Switzerland. A pretext was found in the agitation in the Pays de Vaud against the mild rule of the Bernese oligarchy. There was no widespread movement for calling in the French. The few petitions sent by the Vaudois were signed by a mere handful of persons, that from Lausanne bearing only 130 names. Already by December 28, 1797, the Directory had decided to intervene; at the close of January, 1798, Ménard, with 15,000 troops of the Army of Italy, entered Switzerland and marched to Lausanne; and when Brune, who took the supreme command, brought up reinforcements, the Bernese troops were overpowered and the capital was occupied (March 5). The Swiss Confederacy was thereupon dissolved, and Brune sought to partition the land into three Republics. In the end, however, the differences between suzerain, subject, and "allied" districts were levelled; feudal customs were swept away; and a centralised constitution, closely resembling that of the French Directory, was set up under the name of the Helvetic Republic one and

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indivisible. This title did not prevent the annexation of the "allied" city of Geneva to France (Mühlhausen had already been absorbed in January); still less was it a safeguard against the financial designs of the French government. First Brune, next Le Carlier, and finally a commissioner who bore the appropriate name of Rapinat, extorted large sums from the cantonal treasuries as well as from religious Houses and from the people themselves in the form of requisitions. The total amount wrung from Switzerland exceeded 23,000,000 francs. As was noted above, large sums of money, as well as munitions of war, were sent straightway to Toulon for use in the Egyptian expedition.

These proceedings marred the prospects of the new Constitution. In any case, the imposition of a centralised government on a land, where natural conditions and the genius of the inhabitants alike indicate the need of cantonal freedom, would have met with the gravest difficulties; but success was impossible when the constitution-builders of one day were proved on the next to be the spoilers of the people whom they claimed to have liberated. Several of the Cantons rose in revolt; and, despite the failure of the Swiss of the plains, the sturdy mountaineers of the original Cantons, Schwyz, Uri, and Unterwalden still defied the innovators. On May 2 the Schwyzers, under Reding, dealt the French severe checks at Rothenthurm and Morgarten, and on the following day routed them at the southern end of Lake Zug. A convention was then offered them, and most of them laid down their arms. War, however, soon burst forth again owing to the overbearing conduct of Rapinat, who altered the composition of the Swiss Directory so as to subject it the more completely to that of France. The reconstituted body commanded on July 29 that all the Swiss should swear obedience to the new order of things. This behest, and the interference of the authorities with their ancient customs, drove the central Cantons to revolt. Schwyz and Uri were cajoled into subservience; but the men of Unterwalden held firm until overborne by greatly superior forces. Their last stand, at the town of Stanz, ended in a massacre; more than 1000 men, and as many as 102 women and 25 children were slain (September 9). A remarkable instance of Swiss tenacity was shown at the chapel of St Jacob, between Stanz and Saarnen, which eighteen women held against the French, sealing at last their devotion with their life-blood. By the close of September the unequal struggle was at an end. The subservience of Switzerland had been further assured by the signing of a treaty (August 19) which bound her to help France in all wars (except those waged over-sea), to recognise French rule in the former bishopric of Basel, and to grant to France the use of two roads connecting her lands with southern Germany and Italy. The French covenanted to withdraw their army of occupation in three months, but gave no effect to this clause.

It remained to deal with the extensive district of the Grisons. Here the difficulties were great. The loss of the Valtelline predisposed the

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inhabitants against the French. In vain did French emissaries seek to stir up discontent in that remote region. The atrocities committed at Stanz had opened the eyes of these mountaineers; they rushed to arms to guard their western passes; and their General Diet, on October 17, besought the Emperor to despatch an auxiliary corps. In accordance with an arrangement of long standing, Austrian troops were sent and took up winter quarters almost face to face with the French encamped on the borders. War would have broken out had not the French Directory deemed it inopportune to provoke hostilities with the Emperor at that juncture.

The impression caused by these events was widespread and profound. The revulsion of feeling in the minds of the formerly Gallophil poets, Wordsworth and Coleridge, found expression in lofty strains of indignation that expressed the general verdict of civilised Europe. Nor were Frenchmen unaffected by these sentiments. The banished ex-Director, Carnot, published in Germany a pamphlet protesting against this "impious war," and asserting that it was the policy of the French Directory "to consolidate its strength by the destruction of its neighbours, whom it treated as friends as long as it could extract anything from them; and when the time came to destroy them, there was no want of pretexts to realise the fable of the wolf and the lamb." Germany also was moved to its depths by the French conquest and spoliation of a land that had formerly been a part of the Holy Roman Empire. In fact, had not Germany been rent asunder by the secular feud of Austria and Prussia, war would at once have been declared against France on the Swiss question.

But the Empire was in its dotage, and Austria and Prussia were for the time chiefly concerned with checking one another's territorial designs at the Congress of Rastatt. The limits of our space allow only a brief summary of the complex negotiations and intrigues that there took place. The Congress opened on December 16, 1797; Count Metternich represented the Empire; Counts Lehrbach and Cobenzl, the Habsburg States; Count Goertz and Baron Jacobi, Prussia; Bonaparte, Treilhard, and Bonnier, France; while numerous envoys came from the lesser German States. Before Bonaparte left for Paris he induced the Austrians to withdraw their troops behind the river Lech, in pursuance of a secret article signed at Campo Formio. The French thereupon surrounded Mainz and Ehrenbreitstein, the former of which capitulated, while they besieged the latter fortress for a year. Here, as in the case of Switzerland, the overweening policy of France is traceable to the new Directory and to the general who had installed it in power. His contempt for the Germanic System is expressed in his letter of May 27, 1797: "If the Germanic Body did not exist, it would be necessary to create it for our convenience."

By means of intimidation unsparingly applied to Austria and the

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German States, their plenipotentiaries at Rastatt were brought to abandon the principle of the integrity of the Empire, the whole of the left bank of the Rhine being, with a slight reservation, ceded to France (March 9, 1798). Territorial indemnities for the dispossessed German Princes could be found only by the secularisation of the ecclesiastical States to the east of the Rhine; and for these rich and helpless domains Prussia and several of the central and southern States struggled and intrigued with the powerful aid of France.

Despite the secret clause of the Treaty of Campo Formio which awarded the Archbishopric of Salzburg to Austria, any plan of wholesale secularisation was most repugnant to the Emperor; and, in his double capacity as elective head of the Empire and hereditary ruler of the Habsburg dominions, he now resisted a proposal threatening destruction to the spiritual States, which comprised 3,000,000 inhabitants, and sent three Electors to the Electoral College of eight and thirty-five members to the College of Princes. The French plenipotentiaries, knowing of the secret article relative to Salzburg signed at Campo Formio, made light of his opposition; they also firmly opposed the execution of another secret article which allotted a large strip of the south-east of Bavaria to the Habsburg power. With respect to Salzburg, however, Francis II let it be known that he would give way; he further suggested that Austria would forgo any territorial gain in Germany provided that Prussia would do likewise. This undertaking the Court of Berlin refused to give; and its plenipotentiaries eagerly but vainly plied those of France to know the purport of the secret articles referred to above, so that they might expose the weak points of Austrian policy. Thus the enmity of Austria and Prussia and the ill-concealed greed of many of the secular Princes placed German policy at the mercy of the French envoys, who used their advantage with insolent disdain, Bonnier and the new comer, Jean de Bry, being remarkable for their boorishness. Their conduct was scarcely to be borne even by the princelings and place-hunters who thronged their antechambers at Rastatt; but when Bernadotte, the French ambassador at Vienna, adopted the same attitude and displayed a huge tricolour flag over the gate of the embassy on the eve of a patriotic festival, the anger of the Viennese knew no bounds, and they tore down the hated ensign (April 13). Nor was Bernadotte's indiscretion merely a hasty exhibition of Gascon bravado. The French despatches prove the display of the tricolour to have been an injunction of the French Foreign Office. Bernadotte forthwith left the capital; the two countries once more seemed to be on the brink of war, until, partly owing to Bonaparte's good offices (for he was then on the point of sailing to the East), the affair was patched up by Cobenzl and François de Neufchâteau in conferences held at Selz near Rastatt (May 30–July 6). On May 1 Thugut had been succeeded by the more yielding Cobenzl as Foreign Minister.

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Even before this collision at Vienna the Emperor had, on March 9, taken the important step of appealing to the Czar Paul to mediate between Austria, Prussia, and France on German affairs. The resolve of the French to act as "the arbiters of Europe" (a course of action which Bonaparte had enjoined on Talleyrand in his famous letter of October 7, 1797) was being exercised with a success so complete that no other way of saving Germany seemed to be left. The Czar at once consented; but the envoy whom he sent to Berlin, Prince Repnin, was partly won over to the Prussian way of looking at German affairs. The formation of a new league was therefore very slow. In vain did the British government press the Court of Vienna to come to an understanding with that of Berlin and boldly withstand the demands of France. The trust formerly felt in British policy had been weakened by two events: first, by the withdrawal of our fleet from the Mediterranean in November, 1796, and secondly, by a long and bitter dispute as to the repayment of the loans raised in England for Austria during the late war, amounting to £1,620,000. A convention had been signed in May, 1797, by Count Starhemberg, the Imperial envoy in London, on terms analogous to those of the year 1795; but the method of repayment therein proposed aroused great discontent at Vienna, and on various pretexts that Court refused to repay the stipulated sum. Many reams of despatches went from Downing Street to Vienna filled with protests against Austria's neglect of her treaty obligations. It was in vain. Eden's representations only increased the feeling against England. A specimen of the Austrian retorts may be seen in Thugut's despatch to Starhemberg, of March 17, 1798. In this the Chancellor claimed that the non-payment of British subsidies before the campaign of 1796 marred Austrian prospects from the outset, while the retreat of the fleet from the Mediterranean ruined the campaign in its later stages; further, that we had prompted Naples to sign a separate peace in that year; and finally that the pecuniary convention with Austria was framed on terms "*vraiment judaïques.*" Nevertheless, as the policy of great States ought not to be determined by private rancour, he hoped that Great Britain would now loyally support Austria against "a fierce nation irrevocably determined on the total subversion of Europe and rapidly marching to that end." He therefore charged Starhemberg to find out whether Britain could grant effective financial help to Austria and continue the war in the year 1799; also whether she could send a fleet into the Mediterranean.

By April 20 Pitt had decided to satisfy Thugut by despatching a powerful fleet to the Mediterranean for the defence of the kingdom of Naples, whose interests were now endangered by the threatening attitude of the French in Rome. The announcement of this resolve to the governments of Austria, Russia, and Naples, had no small share in helping on the formation of a new coalition. Nelson was sent into the Mediterranean, with results that astonished the world, hitherto ignorant of

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Bonaparte's intentions. Rumour had confidently pointed to Naples, Sicily, or Ireland, as the goal of Bonaparte's armada; and great was the sense of relief at Vienna and Naples when it was known that, after the capture of Malta, he had sailed to the Levant.

Meanwhile other events betokened the outbreak of war. The French, not content with claiming at the Congress of Rastatt the chief *têtes de pont* on the right bank of the Rhine, pressed on the siege of the Imperial garrison in Ehrenbreitstein, an action that aroused general indignation. In fact, French aggressions in Switzerland, Italy, and the Empire, together with the resolve of Great Britain to send a powerful fleet into the Mediterranean for the protection of Naples, spurred on the Courts of Russia and Austria to action against France. Yet the conduct of Paul and Francis showed characteristic differences. While the Czar throughout the month of May declaimed against the overbearing Republicans, began the formation of a corps that was to help Austria, and made ready a fleet in the Baltic for the support of England in the North Sea, the cautious Habsburg sought in the growing difficulties of France a means of finding a profitable compromise with her. Cobenzl used the private conferences held at Selz, in 1798, as a means of probing French policy so as to find out what gains France would allot to Austria in Italy and Germany. He pressed the special French envoy, François de Neufchâteau, to grant to the Habsburgs the Legations at the expense of the Roman State, and the line of the Oglio in place of the Adige; also, while sparing the Empire the shock of secularisation, to allow Austria to expand westward at the expense of Bavaria. The Directory at once refused these demands, as well as a second reduced series, and pointed to Turkey as providing rich compensation for France, Austria, and Russia alike. Cobenzl replied, in effect, that Austria had no wish to reopen the Eastern Question; she asked for a good frontier in Italy; if that were granted, France might seize Piedmont; if it were not granted, she demanded the exact fulfilment of the terms of Campo Formio, which implied the independence of Rome and of the Cisalpine and Swiss Republics. To this François retorted that those affairs did not concern Austria, and alleged the consent of those nations. The conferences ended on July 6; and Cobenzl returned to Vienna with the belief that war was inevitable — a conviction which gained strength when the news arrived that the French troops had occupied the citadel of Turin, thereby reducing to a shadow the authority of Charles Emmanuel IV (July 3). Everything seemed to show that France looked on Switzerland and Italy as her own, and on the first convenient opportunity would seize the Grisons and the kingdom of the two Sicilies.

With the Neapolitan Court the Habsburgs were intimately connected, the Queen, Marie-Caroline, being at once aunt and mother-in-law of the Emperor Francis II; besides, the seizure of southern Italy would mean the complete domination of the Adriatic by France, and the ruin of the

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commerce of Trieste. Already on May 20, 1798, a defensive treaty between Austria and Naples had been signed at Vienna whereby the two States agreed to help one another to the extent of 60,000 and 40,000 troops respectively; but, as the Viennese draft of the treaty left the sphere of action of the Neapolitan contingent altogether vague, while the Court of Naples insisted that it should be limited to Italy, ratification was delayed; and the despatches of Sir Morton Eden leave little doubt that the delay was expected by the Court of Vienna, which sought to put off the outbreak of war as long as possible, and treated the British Minister with the utmost reserve. Cobenzl also kept open the affair of the loan, presumably because George III insisted on its settlement as a necessary preliminary to any alliance.

The Habsburgs, in fact, based all their hopes on the help of Russia; and the actions of the Czar hitherto betokened less energy in military affairs than in those of the navy. In July his promised succour took shape in a convention according military aid to the Habsburgs; but the contingent was very slow in assembling. The news of the capture of Malta by Bonaparte gave strength and solidity to his purposes, and through him to those of the Habsburgs. Thugut once more took the reins of office, and at the end of July despatched Cobenzl to Berlin to persuade Prussia to join the Czar in decisive action against France. In an important despatch of July 24 Thugut declared that recent events at Rome and in the Cisalpine and Helvetic Republics (especially in the last named) were incompatible with the safety of Austria, Naples, and Tuscany. These arguments were without effect. Frederick William refused the Austrian proposals, just as he had declined the offer of a French alliance which Sieyès was specially charged to make to him; and Prussia maintained an attitude of stubborn half-threatening neutrality which angered and perplexed the allies, as she did in the not dissimilar crisis of 1805.

At St Petersburg everything seemed to smile on Cobenzl's enterprise. In the violent and wayward nature of the Czar Paul the mood that might be counted on with some approach to certainty was that of vanity; and, having latterly accepted the title of Protector of the Order of Malta, he took the French seizure of that island as a personal affront of the most heinous kind. He now sheltered many of the outcast knights, empowering them to establish a Priory of the Order in his own palace. In their turn they named him Grand Master of the Order in place of the traitor who had surrendered Valetta to the French. Paul accepted the title (October 27), fulminated against sacrilegious traitors and robbers with unctuous vehemence similar to that used by the Knights in their manifesto, and decorated his new mistress, Mademoiselle Lapukine, with the insignia of the Order. The rise of this favourite, due to a curious intrigue fomented by the valet and ex-barber, Kutaitsoff, helped on the Austrian cause, seeing that the Czarina, and the now discarded mistress,

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Mademoiselle Nelidoff, were somewhat Prussian in their leanings. Sensuous passion and wounded vanity therefore alike favoured the growth of the new coalition at the capital which was now the centre of European diplomacy.

Indeed, the pacific leanings that marked the first eighteen months of Paul's reign had already given place to delight in the army and a resolve to copy the minutiae of the Prussian military service. Pipeclay and pig-tails were forced on the soldiery; and endless parades convinced Paul that his army was now as perfect a machine as that of the great Frederick. He longed to prove this to the world. But, owing to the opposition of some of his Ministers, and the uncertainty respecting the ulterior aims of Austria in case she drew the sword, the month of August nearly wore away before the promised auxiliary corps began to march towards Galicia. The open and definite policy of Britain inspired confidence, and the Czar welcomed a suggestion made by the British Ambassador, Sir Charles Whitworth, as to the advisability of an Anglo-Russian expedition acting against Holland from Hanover as a base. British influence was wholly in the ascendant. In vain did the Directory ply the Czar with secret offers, made through the Swiss La Harpe, to join in the partition of the Turkish Empire. These insinuations (so Whitworth reported in his despatch of August 17 to Downing Street) gained over some of the Russian Ministers; but in Paul's mind the thought of completing the work begun by Peter the Great and Catharine II seemed to find no place. He bound himself to the Sultan by a treaty, and despatched a powerful fleet from Sebastopol through the Dardanelles to act with the Turks in the Mediterranean (September, 1798). Even here the would-be Allies could not shake off their feelings of distrust. The novel apparition of a Russian Black Sea fleet in the Mediterranean caused some alarm at Vienna, especially when its aim was known to be the blockade of the French in Corfu. The pressing need was to land a Russo-Turkish force in Egypt (as Nelson strongly advised), or to grant to Naples the help for which she was already pleading. The blockade of Corfu showed that Russia looked more to her own territorial designs than to effective action against France; and Whitworth's despatches reveal Paul's fears that England would not only capture but keep Malta.

The violent caprices of the Czar caused even greater concern. His transports of anger against the lovers of Catharine II could be overlooked; but when the bluff old warrior, Suvóroff, was sent in disgrace to his estates for writing a couple of lines of doggerel on the introduction of Prussian pig-tails into the army, and a captain of the Guard publicly received a cuff on the head for having joked about the Czar's German tendencies in a private letter opened by the police, warriors and statesmen alike began to question the durability of Russia's policy and the sanity of her ruler. Nor were his whims confined to home affairs. Matters of gravest moment swayed to and fro under the breath of his caprice.

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Thus, on the arrival of a report as to the bad quality of the Austrian food-supplies provided on the Galician frontier, he sent an order to dissolve the whole auxiliary corps on which the Habsburgs set such store. Whitworth reported to London on October 4 that his utmost efforts and those of Cobenzl barely availed to set matters right. At last, on October 25, the first Russian troops entered Galicia; but not until Christmas did they reach Brünn; and, even so, the contingent mustered scarcely 25,000 strong in place of the 60,000 men for which Austria had covenanted. Is it surprising that Francis II and Thugut wished to see Russia wholly committed to war with France before they provoked a rupture?

The same fears as to the trustworthiness of Paul's professions undoubtedly led the British Ministry to press on the formation of a compact that would bind Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and (if possible) Prussia, in lasting bonds. The proposal took form in a despatch dated from Downing Street, November 16, proposing that the four Powers should employ "their united efforts to reduce France within her ancient limits (an object of evident and pressing interest to the future tranquillity and independence of Europe), to which [alliance] every other Power should be invited to accede." The territorial aims of Austria should be as far as possible satisfied, and, as the Emperor looked mainly to Italy, it ought not to be difficult to please both Powers. The acquisition of the Milanese, in addition to his recent gains in Italy, would probably indemnify Francis II for his efforts against France. As for the King of Prussia, it was known that he wished to see the House of Orange restored to Holland; and he should be invited to state his wishes in other directions. The independence of Switzerland and Holland must be a *sine quâ non* of a durable peace, the strengthening of the latter being secured by union with the southern Netherlands, their "civil and religious constitutions" being duly safeguarded. With these aims the Russian Ministers professed complete sympathy, even while they expressed doubts as to Prussia's co-operation and Austria's straightforwardness. On the latter point the doubts of English Ministers were equally great. Indeed, the vacillations of the Imperial government moved Whitworth to the following unusual outburst in his despatch of December 13, 1798: "God only knows what may be the intentions of the Court of Vienna, but it certainly is felt here that unless some solid assurance of support is held out [to it], such is its want of confidence, the natural effect of its own fluctuating conduct, it will in despair listen to the tempting offers now proposed by the Directory." Austria, it is true, did not accede to the offers here referred to of a joint partition of the Turkish Empire; but both Russia and England credited her with the desire to do so at the last moment and to leave them stranded. This explains the delay, which was to prove so fatal, in the formation of the Second Coalition.

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The only differences between Russian and British policy were with respect to the restoration of the French monarchy and the question of Malta. So far back as July 24, 1798, Whitworth reported the aim of the Czar and his Ministers to be "the re-establishment of general tranquillity on safe and honourable terms, and not the restoration of the French monarchy such as was proposed, and would never have been departed from, by the late Empress." On the other hand, George III and Pitt adhered to the design of restoring the French monarchy. This design inspired British policy until Pitt's resignation, after which a change took place. The difference did not, however, affect the cordiality existing between the Courts of London and St Petersburg; the question was clearly remote.

The Maltese affair touched Paul far more nearly, especially when British cruisers began to blockade Valetta. For the Order of St John, as now reconstituted and settled in his own palace, he had a fatherly love. "He enters into every detail," wrote Whitworth, "with the most enthusiastic ardour." Somewhat later the British envoy reported the Czar's rancour against all who did not bow down before the new Imperial toy. Because the new Elector of Bavaria, Maximilian Joseph, sequestrated the revenues of the Order, his Minister was straightway driven from St Petersburg in the depth of winter and taken to the frontier by the police. The same lot next befell the Spanish ambassador; and the Portuguese Minister lived in daily dread of a message of expulsion. The Bailli de Litta, the Prior of the Russian branch of the Order, who had been the means of conferring the Grand Mastership on the Czar, was also banished to his estates for having taken too much upon himself and paid too little reverence to his august superior. It is not surprising that Whitworth urged the British government to lose no time in recognising the Czar's new title, otherwise he himself might at any time be expelled; for "the rock of Malta is that on which all men split." One incident placed Paul's enthusiasm in a somewhat sinister light. After the signature of the Anglo-Russian Treaty (soon to be noticed) a ukase appeared appointing a distinguished Russian general to command at Malta. On Whitworth significantly enquiring as to the meaning of this phrase, he received the reply that it should have been worded "to command the Russian troops at Malta." Our ambassador accepted the explanation, and even added to Grenville that he believed the Czar's action about the island was prompted by enthusiasm, not by ambition. The British Ministry took a less charitable view of the case, and thenceforth gave close heed to Russian schemes in the Mediterranean. Nelson's fears were no less keen, as his despatches show.

Despite all these difficulties an Anglo-Russian Treaty was at the last very speedily arranged and signed on December 29, 1798 — partly, it would seem, owing to the bribe of 40,000 roubles given by Whitworth to the Czar's valet, Kutaitsoff, "whose credit with Paul increases daily."

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This compact bound the two Powers in close alliance, with the general aim of bringing back France to her pre-revolutionary boundaries, Russia setting on foot a new army of 45,000 men (as a matter of fact it fell short of this by 10,000), on condition of receiving a British subsidy of £75,000 per month, together with a preliminary sum of £225,000 towards the equipment of this force. On the other hand, all hopes of an Anglo-Austrian alliance seemed doomed to disappointment. The wretched disputes about the repayment of the loan by Austria dragged on — they were not settled until the close of 1799 — Grenville even declaring that Austria's refusal to fulfil her treaty obligations seemed to argue a secret arrangement with the French or a wish to come to terms with them at the last moment.

Meanwhile, a petty Power in the south had rushed into the arena, thereby marring alike the cautious calculations of Austria and the far-seeing policy of Pitt. The news of the battle of the Nile threw the King, Queen, and the royalists of Naples, into a delirium of joy (September 4). Queen Caroline poured forth her ecstasy to Lady Hamilton in a letter that showed the fears which had haunted the rulers of Naples ever since the French took Rome and lorded it in the Mediterranean. On the 22nd, when Nelson himself arrived, the enthusiasm knew no bounds; and the feelings of the Court and of the generally royalist populace set strongly in favour of war with France, now that her greatest general and the flower of her soldiery were shut up helplessly in Egypt. On Nelson's request aid was speedily sent to the British and Portuguese ships engaged in blockading the French garrison in Valetta; the native Maltese meanwhile threatened the fortress by land, declared the King of Naples their lawful ruler, and donned his colours. The old suzerain rights of the realm of the Two Sicilies over the island gave a show of reason to these proceedings.

Accordingly, the French ambassador did not leave Naples; nor was the help given to the British ships at Naples and off Valetta by Ferdinand treated as a *casus belli* against him by the French Directory. The news of the battle of the Nile and of the Russian assistance afforded to Austria gave pause to the rulers of France. In truth, they were not ready to face the gathering coalition. On September 23, at General Jourdan's motion, the Councils passed a law enjoining military service on all men capable of bearing arms between twenty and twenty-five years of age — a law which inaugurated the period of great citizen armies. On September 27 a further decree ordered a levy of 200,000 men, but scarcely a fourth of that number answered the call. Moreover, the policy of annexation had scattered the defenders of France from the Helder to the Roman Campagna. The old troops, indeed, were ready; as many as 180,000 Frenchmen had seen service, and some 55,000 of their allies (Dutch, Swiss, and Cisalpines) were reputed to be efficient. But what were these against the forces of Russia, Great Britain, Austria,

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the Holy Roman Empire, Naples, not to speak of Turkey in the east? The failure of the three French expeditions against Ireland and of the Irish revolt itself had weakened the French navy and restored England's striking power. Indeed, the recent outbreak of hostilities between France and the United States seemed to presage a war in which all the world, from the Mississippi to the Volga and the Euphrates, would combine to overbear the haughty Republic. In such a case, was it rash to set the ball rolling against a remote part of the long line of the French defensive?

Such were the thoughts that weighed with Nelson and the rulers of Naples. Their right hand now as always was General Acton, whose varied powers had raised him to the chief posts in the kingdom. While the fear of France lay heavy on the royal couple he was kept aloof, and the more temporising Marchese di Gallo held the portfolio for Foreign Affairs — an arrangement which deceived no one at Naples or Paris, least of all Nelson. The Admiral's hatred for "the French robbers" was now fanned by his sudden and unconquerable passion for Lady Hamilton. The beautiful wife of Sir William Hamilton, the septuagenarian ambassador who upheld British interests at Naples, was a bosom-friend of Queen Caroline, and shared her hatred of all Republicans. Lady Hamilton's influence thus instilled into Nelson a fatal drop of political venom. Thenceforth his outlook on Continental events was no longer solely that of a British admiral; it became, for a time at least, that of a Neapolitan Bourbon.

The Court of Naples now showed the utmost arrogance. Already it had occupied the papal fiefs of Benevento and Ponte Corvo, and now dreamt of the conquest of Rome and Corfu. If the worst should come, it had the British fleet at hand for safe conveyance to Sicily. Another cause of hesitation on its part was also removed. None of the Neapolitan generals had seemed worthy of leading a division; but Caroline's prayers to the Emperor to send them a leader were now answered by the arrival of General Mack. Mack's reputation is one of the puzzles in which this period abounds, until we remember that his capacity as a strategist and organiser shone merely by comparison with that of the other Austrian generals. Of this he seems to have had some inkling himself; for Eden had recently reported that he was strongly averse from war in central Europe. Nevertheless, he now came to reform and lead an army of which he knew nothing, and nearly half of which consisted of recruits lately torn from the plough or the gambling dens of Naples. Outwardly that army seemed to be ready for anything; and the Queen now sought to draw the Emperor into her toils, alleging that the French were about to invade the Two Sicilies and that it was wiser to deal the blow than to wait to receive it.

Francis, however, turned a deaf ear to protestations and prayers alike. Nay, he saw in the entreaty not merely the action of a headstrong

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Queen and revengeful favourites; he discerned the hand of England. Eden reported that the Emperor spoke out his suspicions to the Neapolitan envoy; and Thugut afterwards in an interview with him accused the British Ministry "with unusual warmth" of pushing on the King and Queen of Naples so that their family ties with the Emperor and the alliance nearly completed between them should involve Austria in the struggle. Eden no less warmly repelled the taunt; but he had not at hand so complete a refutation as that which the British archives supply. On October 3 (the day when the belated news of Nelson's victory reached London) Grenville warned the Neapolitan envoy of the risks of attacking France; he also wrote to Hamilton in these terms: "His [Britannic] Majesty was not insensible of the danger which must attend such a resolution, if taken without the fullest assurances of support from the Court of Vienna....In this situation it appeared that the decision both in point of substance and of time must be left to his Sicilian Majesty's own determination, and that the most friendly conduct which his [Britannic] Majesty could pursue on this subject was to refer the negotiation to Naples, and thus to leave it to his Sicilian Majesty to act in this respect as circumstances may require, and particularly as may be found most expedient from a view of the final resolutions (whatever they may be) of the Court of Vienna." Grenville therefore sent full powers to Hamilton for concluding an Anglo-Neapolitan alliance, but warned him that no loan must be expected from Great Britain.

These warnings came too late. The Neapolitan Court and their British advisers had already thrown caution to the winds. On October 16, before receiving Grenville's despatch, Hamilton wrote to him that the French government had ordered an army of 60,000 men to act against Naples—an absurdly false report—and that "the conferences we have had with General Acton have certainly decided this government to the salutary determination of attacking rather than waiting to be attacked." On November 19 he reported Mack's great satisfaction with the Neapolitan army, at a review held near Caserta on the 12th, when Mack assured Nelson that "he had never in all his experience seen so fine a body of men." Hamilton added: "In the evening we (*i.e.* Nelson and he) had a consultation with Generals Mack and Acton in which we all agreed that the boldest measures were the safest." The ambassador further passed sentence on himself by the admission, "The uncertainty of the Emperor's support seemed to be the only drawback." This informal council then and there decided that the army should enter the Roman States on the 23rd. Nelson also offered to take 5000 troops by sea to Leghorn in answer to the prayers of the Grand Duke of Tuscany for help. During these conferences Grenville's despatch arrived, but too late to give pause to the Queen and her self-constituted advisers. The fate of Naples was already decided by her and by Lady Hamilton.

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On November 22 Nelson sailed with 5000 Neapolitan troops for Leghorn to raise Tuscany against the French; two days later the Neapolitan main army, about 40,000 strong, crossed the boundary in five columns and headed for Rome, whence the French commander, Championnet, withdrew in haste with the small garrison. Taking this action, not as a prudent strategic move for the purpose of concentration on his base of operations, Ancona, but as a confession of weakness, Ferdinand came up and entered Rome as conqueror amidst loud acclamations at the overthrow of the French (November 29). His triumph was short-lived. After concentrating the French forces and taking up a good central position, Championnet burst upon the widely dispersed columns which Mack judged to be needful for the success of the enveloping movements to which Austrian strategy still clung. Two of the Neapolitan divisions were shattered at Fermo and Terni, and the chief mass of them at Civita Castellana; thereafter the invaders never dared to look the Republicans in the face. Championnet's men re-entered Rome on December 9, and thence pushed the wreck of Mack's army before them to the banks of the Volturno. The strongholds of the Abruzzi surrendered at discretion; and Gaeta, which might have been another Acre to the French, opened its gates to Ney at the first summons.

But now, when all seemed won, the French found before them a sturdier foe than the royal army. The peasants flocked to arms at the appeal of priests and dealt severe checks to isolated French divisions. The *lazzaroni* of Naples also bestirred themselves for a great effort. They had long been known for their hardihood and fierceness, their hatred of new ways, and devotion to the reigning House. For them the easy life of the city and the favour of its patron saint, Januarius, were all in all. The ideas of the Revolution and the Republic, which had filtered into the social strata above them, aroused their hatred because they were new; and now, when King and Queen seemed about to flee before an army of infidel innovators, the rabble clamoured for arms, slaughtered an Austrian courier under the King's eyes, and refused to depart from the palace until the King promised not to leave them. But promises sat lightly upon Ferdinand. Already he was concerting with Nelson the means of escape from this warlike populace; and on the night of December 21 the royal family, together with the Hamiltons, the chief Ministers, and 20,000,000 ducats in treasure, stealthily made their way to the British fleet, which forthwith sailed for Palermo. The government of the mainland was entrusted to Prince Pignatelli; in reality it passed to the *lazzaroni*. Helped by some of the disbanded troops, they secured the forts, Castel Nuovo and Castel dell' Uovo, and prepared for a desperate defence of the city. Meanwhile Mack had concluded regular warfare by a truce which made over to the enemy the fortress of Capua and all the land to the north of the Volturno (January 12, 1799); a few days later he fled from his mutinous soldiery to the French

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camp, where he received scornful permission to proceed to the north of Italy.

The truce was soon broken by the French. The Neapolitan reformers, fearing for their lives amidst that fierce rabble, secretly sent a message to Championnet bidding him advance with all speed. The *lazzaroni*, raging the more at every sign of treachery, thronged out to fight him; and villages and farmhouses became the scenes of savage fighting which cost the invaders dear. Yet little by little they pressed in on the capital. There the democrats by a ruse had seized on the Castle of St Elmo; but even that misfortune failed to cow the *lazzaroni*; they beat back Generals Mounier and Duhesme from the northern suburb; and, when Thiébault finally carried that post, the city still defied the Republicans. The struggle went on street by street and house by house; and only after two more days of slaughter did disciplined valour triumph over southern fanaticism. Even then it was as much a triumph of tact as of force. Championnet was one of the few French generals of that period who showed skill in dealing with alien peoples. As the fighting waned, he spoke to the *lazzaroni* in their own tongue, promising freedom for their city, every comfort for its population, and the utmost respect for St Januarius. The words told with magical force; Thiébault marched with a guard of honour to the shrine of the saint, and himself with politic hypocrisy knelt at the altar. On that very evening Championnet and his staff received an overwhelming ovation at the theatre from the democrats, now exultant at their escape from a petty and capricious tyranny.

Taking advantage of this revulsion of feeling, Championnet at once established the Parthenopean Republic on the ruins of the Bourbon rule (January 23). At first the change was eagerly welcomed by the middle classes and many of the nobles; five eminent men were chosen as Directors; and the Councils, elected on the French model, set about the abolition of tithes and of feudal abuses, and in every way strove to recall the days of July and August, 1789, at Paris and Versailles. These bright hopes were soon to be overcast. The exaction of 60,000,000 francs from the conquered territory would alone have strained the gratitude of the Neapolitan democrats; but now there settled down on the city the harpies that had sucked the life from Rome and other Italian capitals, — commissioners selecting pictures for the Paris galleries, contractors, who, under the guise of catering for the army, starved the soldiers and gorged themselves, together with traffickers of many kinds, all at the expense of the liberated land. These mean marauders, albeit protected by the diplomatic agent Faypoult, newly come from Paris, at first met with a sharp rebuff. Championnet's justice was no less marked than his courage; and, seeing whither all this was tending, he first curbed the chief plunderers, and on their defying his authority, expelled the "commission" from Neapolitan territory. They

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speedily had their revenge. Appealing to the French Directory, they procured his disgrace; on the last day of February he handed over the command to Macdonald, who was on good terms with Faypoult and his following. The plunder went on once more, and with it the area of discontent and revolt steadily widened, Naples becoming a byword against France and a source of hope for her enemies.

The rupture with Naples decided the French Directory to vigorous action in northern Italy. They had long marked Piedmont as their own. Looking on a European war as certain, they sent the ambitious young Barthélemy Joubert, who had lately dictated terms to the Batavian Republic, to end matters with the King of Sardinia. The French commander of the citadel of Turin, Emmanuel Grouchy, set the Jacobin wire-pullers to work throughout the kingdom; and, when the democrats were on the point of revolt, Joubert marched in to repress disorder. Charles Emmanuel IV, after being subjected to the most ignominious treatment, abdicated (December 9, 1798), retiring to Florence, and thence to the island of Sardinia, where the House of Savoy found shelter till the year 1814. Piedmont provided the invaders with rich prey; apart from the spoiling of palaces, churches, and museums, it paid 10,330,000 francs to the French treasury within the space of three months. The natural result was a fierce and widespread revolt which greatly weakened the French position in northern Italy. As had happened with Holland, Switzerland, Rome, and Naples, the intervention of the French furnished the Allies with the *casus belli* and France herself with the sinews of war.

These events in Italy likewise clinched the Anglo-Russian alliance, which, as we have seen, was concluded on December 29. Exactly a month before the Czar had covenanted to send military and naval help to the King of Naples. Portugal was already at war with France. Nevertheless, half of the month of February, 1799, had slipped by before the Czar was convinced that Austria would draw the sword. Whitworth reported on February 19 that the long uncertainties were at an end, and that the force destined by Russia for the help of Naples would now operate with her first expeditionary force in the north of Italy and with the Austrians, the combined armies being placed under the command of that fierce fighter, Suvóroff. Another powerful Russian force, that subsidised by Great Britain, was being prepared for service on the Rhine; and the Pitt Ministry strongly advised that it should be directed towards Switzerland, as was afterwards done.

The news of these alliances and the overthrow of the dynasties of Naples and Savoy, as well as the encroachments of the French in Germany, stirred the Viennese government to new activity. While the Congress of Rastatt was sitting, a Russian corps was marching to the aid of Austria and the Republican troops were besieging Ehrenbreitstein; and now, while the French demands on Germany were steadily rising, came

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the news that the Imperial garrison in that stronghold had surrendered to the Republicans. The long farce of the Congress was evidently played out. Yet the French plenipotentiaries kept their posts, skilfully feeding the hopes of the smaller German States with the prospect of rich Church lands and threatening the Empire with war if the Russians should enter any of its States. On January 31, 1799, they warned the Austrian envoy that if they were not informed of the retreat of the Russians within fifteen days war would ensue. The Habsburg Court returned no answer; and, before dawn on March 1, two French armies crossed the Rhine. Eleven days later Austria declared war, yet the Congress continued to discuss the terms of peace between France and the Empire. Even the news of the decisive victory of the Archduke Charles at Stockach (March 25) failed to stop the trafficking of the petty Princes with the French envoys under the wing of Prussia; and the auction was proceeding when the Emperor launched a declaration dissolving the Congress and annulling all its acts (April 8). The French envoys, affecting indignation at this irregular ending to the activities of fifteen months, held their ground; and the approach of the Austrian vanguard to Rastatt found them still treating with their German clients.

But now the farce was to end in tragedy. Pursuant to the orders that came from Paris, the French plenipotentiaries remained at Rastatt several days after their German colleagues had left; the Viennese Court, suspecting that this obstinacy implied the existence of important plans between France and her newly-found vassals, seems to have passed the hint to headquarters to seize the envoys' papers. The Archduke Charles being temporarily absent from duty owing to a nervous disorder, the control passed into the hands of General Schmidt, well known for his hatred of France; he placed around the town a regiment of Szekler hussars commanded by an unscrupulous man, Barbaczy, while near by was another regiment comprising a band of French *émigrés*. Barbaczy bade the French envoys depart, seeing that the Congress was at an end. They declined. On April 25 horsemen seized the papers of one of their couriers. On the 28th Barbaczy ordered them to leave the town within twenty-four hours, and refused any safe-conduct. Setting out at night, they were stopped almost at once; Szekler hussars (or *émigrés* in their uniform) dragged them from their carriages and slew Bonnier and Roberjot outright; de Bry was left for dead, but afterwards escaped. The valuables of their families and all their papers were seized.

Such are the bare facts as to the outrage. Its inmost secrets will perhaps never be known. An official enquiry set on foot by the Austrian government came to an abrupt end, and all the documents relating to the subject soon vanished from the archives of Vienna. The action of the Directory in exposing its envoys to needless dangers gave some colour to the suggestion that it sought to win popularity for the war

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out of their blood. But, even if we accept this very strained explanation, which then found strangely wide credence, Austria is not absolved from a damning charge. Barbaczy and his tools were guilty of the deliberate murder of men who had not yet ceased to be plenipotentiaries, whose persons were therefore inviolable; yet the murderers were never reprimanded or degraded. In spite of some suspicious evidence which has recently been brought to light, it still seems probable that the Austrian authorities meant to do no more than chastise the envoys for their unbearable insolence and seize their papers. If this alone was their aim, the outcome was a ghastly blunder. The estimable Roberjot was torn from the arms of his wife and slain, while the swashbuckler Jean de Bry escaped. Above all, no state papers of any importance were found. In its defiance of the law of nations for the attainment of petty ends, as in its mysterious ineffectiveness, the outrage stands without a parallel in the modern history of civilised nations.

This sinister event added passion to the strife already raging in Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. The limits of our space, however, prevent any but the briefest notice of the war of 1799. Despite the long preparations of Austria, the French were first in the field and gained a few successes on the Upper Inn, which could not be followed up owing to Jourdan's crushing defeat by the Archduke Charles at Stockach in Swabia (March 25). Whether from weak health, excess of prudence, or the interference of the *Hofkriegsrath* with his plans, Charles neglected to reap the full fruits of victory; and the French fell back unharmed through the Black Forest to the Rhine.

In Italy loss upon loss befell the tricolour flag. There the French had 102,000 men in the northern provinces, and 32,000 men in and around Naples, besides 32,000 Italian and Polish allies. But these forces were widely scattered and ineffectively handled. The commander-in-chief, Schérer, was speedily driven by the Austrians from the lines of the Adige, Mincio, and Oglio, and Mantua was left to its fate. Once behind the Adda, Schérer resigned the command to Moreau. Even this skilful leader was no match for the masterful Suvóroff, who now brought 18,000 Russians to help about double that number of Habsburg troops in the field. The furious onset of the Muscovites under their beloved leader was irresistible; the Allies pierced the French lines, unduly spread out along the right bank of the Adda, forced the bridgehead at Cassano, and, capturing Sérurier with 3000 men (April 27), forthwith entered Milan. A month later the Allies, with the help of the Piedmontese royalists, gained possession of the city of Turin; and Moreau had great difficulty in cutting his way through the passes of the Maritime Alps to the Genoese coast.

Meanwhile Macdonald was advancing with the French forces drawn from Naples and Central Italy, now 36,000 strong, his progress also being hampered by the risings of the peasantry. Yet his entry on the scene of

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action was at first incisive. He defeated the Austrians at Modena (June 12), thereby paralysing the allied advance westwards. Moreau, who reached Genoa on June 27, thereupon ordered him to strike at the communications of the Allies between Piacenza and Mantua, and so draw Suvóroff away to the east, while he himself assailed his rear. This plan came near to success, but Suvóroff by a rapid concentration and forced march threw himself on Macdonald while Moreau was still in Genoa, dealt the Army of Naples terrible blows in three days' fighting on the banks of the Tidone and Trebbia (June 17–19), and compelled it to retreat towards the Apennines. In sore plight the beaten troops crossed those mountains, and, doubling back by way of Spezzia and the Cornice Road, finally reached Genoa in a state of utter exhaustion. There Macdonald met Moreau, whose movements had been too much hampered by his earlier losses of *matériel* to effect anything of importance against Suvóroff's rear. The Russian leader, after routing Macdonald, had faced about and forced him to retire through the Bocchetta Pass. For these brilliant achievements Suvóroff received the title of Prince with the cognomen "*Italiski*" (Italian). On the French side Macdonald retired on the plea of illness, and the united French forces were entrusted to General Joubert.

These disasters brought about the fall of the Cisalpine, Roman, and Parthenopean Republics. Everywhere the democrats felt the anger of priests and the hatred of the fickle populace; but nowhere did reaction lead to tragedies so sombre as those which befell the city of Naples. There the new faith, beloved by the cultured few, remained a suspected novelty to the rabble; and the shooting of royalist conspirators in the southern districts failed to keep the country for the Republic even while the French were at hand. Macdonald's retirement at the close of April gave full force to the reaction. He left two French battalions in the Castle of St Elmo, while the patriot forces held the smaller forts, Nuovo and dell' Uovo. But what was this against a British squadron acting under Troubridge, a Russo-Turkish detachment sent from Corfu, and the royalist bands mustering in the south under the King's envoy, Cardinal Ruffo? In the middle of June these forces closed in on Naples and speedily cooped up the Republicans in the castles named above. Ruffo, however, fearing the approach of Bruix' Franco-Spanish fleet then hovering off the Genoese coast, parleyed with the garrisons of the Castelli Nuovo and dell' Uovo, and arranged for a capitulation, granting them the honours of war and a safe-conduct (June 19). In granting these very lenient terms Ruffo went beyond the supplementary instructions of April 29 sent to him by the King. Such as they were, these terms received the signature of Captain Foote, then commanding the British force (June 23).

But on the morrow, instead of Bruix, Nelson appeared in the offing and ranged his 18 men-of-war and 22 gun-vessels off the city. This

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event spread dismay among the Republicans. Invested with unlimited powers by the King at Palermo, and claiming with reason that his arrival completely altered the situation, Nelson determined to set aside the capitulations granted to the garrisons, which had not yet been carried out; that with the garrison at Castellamare had taken effect, and Nelson respected it. Ruffo, while firmly protesting against this, warned the two garrisons of the change in the situation (evening of June 25); and the commander of the Castel Nuovo sent a reply which proves him to have known of the change. Neither Nelson, nor Captains Troubridge and Ball, who saw the commanders of both castles, made any promise that the lives of the garrisons should be spared. Nelson asserted that he had the right to override the Cardinal's authority as much as that of Captain Foote, and that the capitulations with the rebels were null and void until ratified by the King, who alone could decide on their pardon. It was with knowledge of these facts that the garrisons came out on the evening of June 26. On the 28th, after the arrival of orders from Palermo, their leaders were seized, and, after Ferdinand had reached Naples on July 10, were executed by the Neapolitan authorities. Nelson's conduct in this matter was certainly marked by vindictiveness and ferocity; but the charge of treacherously setting at naught a completed compact has never been made good. Indeed, a comparison of the original documents lately published by the Navy Records Society with the version of them given by Dumas and Sacchinelli, shows that Nelson's detractors have, in some cases, had little regard for truth. In the case of Prince Caracciolo, however, his action was quite indefensible.

The arrival of Ferdinand saw the beginning of a royalist Reign of Terror. Those who had taken arms against him were put to death by hundreds in the capital and in the provinces. Even the civilians, including the *élite* of the country, who temperately administered public affairs after the flight of the Court, found no mercy; as many as 120 of them went to the scaffold; and Naples never recovered from the treatment now inflicted by the boorish King, who from Nelson's flagship dispensed justice to his subjects and then sailed away to Palermo. St Elmo surrendered on July 12 to Captain Troubridge, who also assisted in reducing Capua a few weeks later. Their garrisons were sent to France. For his share in these events Nelson received from Ferdinand the questionable honour of the Dukedom of Bronte in Sicily. George III, however, accorded to the victor of the Nile at his first appearance at Court a most chilling reception; and Hamilton justly received a more serious rebuke. During those terrible days of midsummer he held no mandate from the Sicilian Bourbons. While on Nelson's ship it behoved him as British Minister to curb the vindictiveness of the admiral and of the Neapolitan royalists. He made one weak effort to do so; but, on the whole, he was as clay in their hands. He therefore soon received

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the order to quit a post where his senile weakness had soiled his country's flag and his own public and private reputation.

Thus closed this episode, the most pitiful, perhaps, in the annals of peoples who have heedlessly sought to break away from an unbearable past and to win their way forthwith to a political millennium. The childlike faith of the Neapolitan democrats, their southern impetuosity, the baleful interference of foreigners, the Medea-like hatred of Marie-Caroline and the Circean figure of Lady Hamilton, help to invest those events with dramatic vividness. And the drama was not without its Nemesis. If Naples lost her noblest sons, she yet blasted the fame of the intervening foreigners, and she bequeathed to Italians and Englishmen of a later day the duty of vengeance and reparation in the overthrow of the thenceforth detested Bourbons.

Meanwhile the French were on the brink of still greater disasters in the north of the peninsula. The citadel of Alessandria surrendered on July 22, and eight days later Mantua hoisted the white flag. These events set free large besieging forces of the Allies; the recent arrival of reinforcements from Russia also brought the Muscovite total up to 27,000 men. Thus it was against foes superior in numbers and prestige that the French moved out from the shelter of Genoa early in August. Saint-Cyr advised delay; but the ambitious young Joubert, not knowing of the fall of Mantua, burned to strike a blow that might lessen the pressure on that garrison. He therefore seized the commanding heights above the town of Novi. There the French, 35,000 strong, were surprised by Kray's Austrians, whose skirmishers slew Joubert at the outset. Nevertheless the French bravely rallied and beat back three onsets of Suvóroff's somewhat scattered divisions. Late in the day the Russian leader ordered the Austrian general Melas, who had come up with 9000 troops, to circle round the heights and attack the French right flank and rear on the side of Gavi. Before this unexpected onset the wearied French broke and fled. The village and defile of Pasturana were now their only way of escape. The gorge was speedily choked by waggons and guns; and on the maddened rout a Hungarian battalion, crowning a height further south, opened fire with frightful effect. Darkness alone saved the Republicans from utter ruin. As it was, they lost 12,000 men and all hope of regaining Piedmont (August 15).

But, as often happens, the breath of victory fanned to a flame the smouldering hatreds of the Allies. These resulted from the nature of the arrangements between Russia and Austria. The Emperor Francis looked on Suvóroff's Russians as an auxiliary corps, and their leader as under his direction. Against the dictation to which this naturally led, Suvóroff chafed and stormed, while his men vaunted the prowess of the chief whose triumphs had been gained despite the foolish meddlings of the Viennese government. The Austrian officers, on the other hand, censured his tactics at Novi as tardy and unskilful, and held

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up to shame the maraudings of his troops as the deeds of ruthless barbarians. Already, too, the territorial designs of Austria had come into sharp conflict with the aims of Russia and Great Britain. On hearing of the capture of Turin by the Allies, the Czar bade Suvóroff invite Charles Emmanuel back to his former capital, a proposal which Francis II and Thugut sharply countermanded. In vain did Eden, during the last days of his mission at Vienna, press upon the latter the legitimate claims of the House of Savoy. In his last important despatch to Downing Street he reported that Austria's aims were limited to extension of her borders, especially in Italy, where she looked on the greater part of Piedmont, and probably Tuscany and the Legations, as her indemnity. The instructions issued to Lord Minto, the new British ambassador at Vienna, laid stress on a change of government in France and a general restoration of the expelled dynasties; but his remonstrances to the Austrian Minister (August 10) evoked the reply that the affair concerned Austria alone; that Suvóroff commanded an auxiliary Russian corps, it was true, but the Emperor Francis regarded him as an Austrian general in his own service; besides, the treaty of Charles Emmanuel with France (April 5, 1797) made him an enemy to Austria, which therefore intended to treat Piedmont as conquered territory, the events of 1798 having shown that the barrier fortresses of that land ought to be in the hand of a competent military Power.

Long before this piece of impertinent folly reached England, the British government had seen the urgent need of withdrawing Suvóroff from the dictation of Vienna and uniting all the Russian forces under his control. In the middle of June Grenville urged Whitworth to suggest to the Czar the desirability of sending the Russian leader and his countrymen into Switzerland and of placing the subsidised army destined for that land under his command. On July 9 our ambassador reported to his chief Paul's hearty approval of this measure, which would enable the veteran with 50,000 Russians, and the Archduke Charles with upwards of 30,000 Austrians, to sweep Masséna from Switzerland, and then form an imposing mass for the invasion of France under the aegis of the Comte de Provence by the open frontier of Franche Comté. Such was the plan to be pressed on the Court of Vienna by the new ambassador, Lord Minto. It met with no difficulty there; and, as previously agreed, Lord Mulgrave went as the British military representative to the Archduke Charles' headquarters for the combined working out of this scheme.

Its working out was a masterpiece of shortsighted selfishness. As the new Russian army under Korsakoff, some 30,000 strong, marched into Switzerland, the Archduke Charles' troops were withdrawn in order to besiege Philippsburg and Mainz, thus leaving the Allies no stronger than before, and exposing Suvóroff's corps of 20,000 men to grave risks. That insult might not be wanting, Thugut on August 9 declared

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the holding of any council on military affairs to be needless for the present campaign; Mulgrave's presence was therefore superfluous. As for the proposal to recall Charles Emmanuel, Thugut hotly declared that it was an English intrigue at St Petersburg, to which Austria would never consent. Five weeks later Minto reported the efforts made by an Austrian clique to set the Czar against England by the wholly false charge that we meant to keep Malta, and he remarked with humorous despair that the Allies spent as much time over one another's plans as over those of the enemy. This was literally true of the course of action imposed on the Archduke Charles. His removal from a strong position near Zurich to the middle Rhine was mainly due to the wish of his Court to have an army ready to watch affairs in the Netherlands, whither an Anglo-Russian expedition was about to be sent. Thugut suspected, and with some reason, that the Allies were urging Prussia to co-operate in that quarter by holding out to her the hope of gains near the Dutch boundary. Eden in his last interview with Thugut sounded him as to the possibility of Austria acceding to some such arrangement; he received a haughty refusal. The upshot of it all was that the arrival of Korsakoff led to no increase of strength for the Allies in Switzerland owing to Austrian fears that her hated Prussian rival might gain too much land on the lower Rhine; and the Anglo-Russian expedition to Holland, soon to be noticed, received no support from Prussia owing to the secular jealousy of the two German States.

Switzerland, however, was to witness the most dramatic series of disasters ever brought about by the jealousy of allies. Suvóroff's enterprise fared ill from the outset. Whether from mere ill-humour, or, as he stated, owing to the treacherous neglect of his Austrian allies to supply him with transport, he was slow in moving northwards to the upper Ticino. Lecourbe's obstinate defence of its narrowing defiles further delayed his progress; and only by desperate fighting and with heavy losses did the plain-dwellers of the east hew their way over the St Gothard Pass and down its northern slopes against troops inured to mountain fighting. While this strife of Titans was going on in the gorges of the upper Reuss, Masséna saw his chance. By masterly movements and sharp fighting his lieutenant, Oudinot, thrust 15,000 men behind Korsakoff at Zurich, while Masséna and Mortier barred his advance with 18,000 men and shut him up in the town with his back to the lake and the river Limmat. After struggling for nearly two days to free himself from their grip, he at last formed his infantry into a dense mass and cut his way through Oudinot's lines, leaving behind, however, 8,000 prisoners, 100 cannon, and all his treasure and stores (September 25–26). At the same time Soult, on the river Linth, overpowered Hotze's corps of Austrians destined for the immediate support of Suvóroff, took 3000 prisoners, and drove the survivors out of Switzerland. Suvóroff heard the first rumours of these disasters near Altdorf (September 28). There too he

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found that there was no road to Schwyz, as he had been led to expect. Nevertheless, leaving guns and waggons, he struggled over the mountains to Muotta, only to learn the full truth about Korsakoff and that Masséna was in force at Schwyz on his flank. A weaker man would have bent under these blows of fortune. From Suvóroff they called forth a defiant resolve to cross trackless wastes rather than surrender. Beating off several attacks, in one of which his unsupported footmen captured several French cannon, he forced his way through the Panixer Pass, and led 15,000 starving, ragged, but unconquerable veterans into the Grisons, entering Chur on October 8. Thence he made his way to Lindau, and, refusing to take concerted action with the Austrians, sullenly retired into winter quarters (October 30). The plan which, with intelligent co-operation of the three armies, might have laid Switzerland at the feet of the Allies, led to the overthrow of two Russian armies, and ruined the hopes of the Coalition.

The autumn likewise brought disaster to the Allies in the north. In pursuance of an Anglo-Russian treaty of June 11–22, 1799, a joint expedition was prepared against Holland. The British force, 12,000 strong, landed at the Helder (August 27) and by the aid of Dutch royalists gained unopposed possession of the Dutch fleet moored at the Texel. It then beat off an attack of French and Batavians led by Brune and Daendels. When the 17,000 Russians under General Hermann arrived in the middle of September a combined attack was made on Brune's army at Bergen. The precipitation of the Russians on the right wing and the lack of timely support by the British on that side, marred the enterprise; and, though the Duke of York beat the Republicans at the centre and left, the Allies had to retreat with the loss of 4000 men (September 19). A further reverse decided the Duke to fall back on his entrenchments at Zype. These events deterred the Orange party from attempting the promised rising and rendered hopeless the prospect of help from Prussia, on which the Allies had counted. When sickness began to waste the allied forces the British government decided to recall its troops. The Duke of York thereupon concluded a convention with Brune at Alkmaar by which he agreed to evacuate Holland, the British retaining the Dutch fleet (October 18). The Russian force was quartered in the Channel Islands for the winter. This sorry ending to a great expedition aroused general indignation, but the Czar Paul met the news with unexpected firmness and admitted that Hermann was mainly to blame for the mishap at Bergen.

Paul's wrath fell in unstinted measure on Austria. Before the news of the mishaps in Switzerland and Holland reached him he had already (October 13) sent a curt summons to that government to declare what gains it contemplated making in Italy, and to explain why its resident at Turin treated Piedmont as Austrian territory. Unless satisfactory answers to these questions reached St Petersburg, Paul asserted that he

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would break off all relations with the Court of Vienna and leave the House of Habsburg to its fate. Before a reply reached him, he received the news of the battle of Zurich along with Suvóroff's bitter complaints of his treatment by the Austrians. At once he wrote to Francis II (October 28) that he must part company with an ally who sacrificed the interests of Europe to his own aggrandisement. He thereupon recalled Suvóroff and Korsakoff to Russia.

Nevertheless, Francis II and Thugut held on their way with a dogged resolve which seemed to be justified by results. For, though the events in Switzerland compelled the Archduke Charles to retreat from the Rhine, yet Italy fell more and more under Habsburg control. On November 4 Melas cut in twain Championnet's army on the banks of the Stura, and drove part of it with heavy loss to the Col di Tenda, while the remainder fled for safety to Genoa. The French garrison of Ancona surrendered to the Russian fleet on November 18; and on December 2 the fortress of Coni fell into Austrian hands. Francis II imperiously demanded that Ancona should be given up to his troops; and the dispute over this subject rendered impossible any accommodation between the two Powers. Austria seemed, however, to have triumphed. The end of the campaign found the tricolour waving only above the sore-stricken garrison of Genoa, while Savoy and Nice lay open to the Imperialists.

These successes were to count for little in the history of the world as compared with the landing of Bonaparte on October 9 at Fréjus. In this case also the particularist aims of the Allies had marred everything. If the Russian fleet, instead of operating in the Adriatic, had helped to seal up the Egyptian ports, as Nelson urged, the French commander could scarcely have slipped away. But the action of the Russians in the Mediterranean was like that of the Austrians on land; they thought far more of gaining a hold on the Ionian Isles, Malta, Ancona, and, a little later, Corsica, than of serving the common cause. Thus, for lack of that frank understanding and co-operation which Pitt had striven to bring about, the efforts of the Allies hopelessly miscarried by land and by sea, their fleets failing to shut up in Egypt the one man whose presence in Europe was most to be dreaded. Fourteen years were to elapse before there recurred so favourable an opportunity of reducing the overgrown power of France as that which the Allies now threw away; and then it was a Europe vivified by the reforms originating from the Revolution which finally beat down the might of Napoleon.

The strength gained by France from that great popular upheaval was shown by the war of 1799. The efforts of the Allies to wrest the Netherlands, the Rhineland, and Switzerland from her grasp failed, even when her best general and her finest troops were far away. This failure resulted mainly from the belated opening of the war, the neutrality of Prussia,

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and the narrow particularism of Habsburg policy. Had the Allies been ready in the summer of 1798 to throw powerful forces into the three countries above named they would have been welcomed by half of those populations. As it was, their delays enabled France to coerce the Dutch, overpower the Swiss federals, and capture Ehrenbreitstein and other Rhenish strongholds. Except in Italy, the efforts of the Allies in 1799 failed to recover the positions which France easily seized in the previous year during the tedious bargainings of the Powers. For that fatal delay, as also for the collapse of the Coalition, the territorial schemes of Thugut were in large measure responsible; but blame must rest equally on the Court of Berlin, whose suspicious policy degraded Prussia in the eyes of her own people and weakened the striking power of Austria and Russia. Even the successes of the Allies in Italy conduced to the ultimate triumph of France; for they swelled that cry for a strong government which enabled Bonaparte to establish a military dictatorship, destined to overthrow in turn the Continental Powers, whose incapacity for common action now stood glaringly revealed.

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CHAPTER XXII

BRUMAIRE

By the spring of 1799 the government of the Directory had become completely discredited. With power little short of absolute it had neither made a brilliant peace, nor procured the means of continuing the war. In its foreign relations it was "insolent, base and awkward," at home violent and oppressive. A series of *coups d'état*, directed alternately against Jacobins and royalists, had emphasised the fact that the chief object of the Directors was not to serve France but to maintain their own tenure of power. Meanwhile the country was paying a heavy price for its government of regicidal defence. In the Alps, whole villages were peopled with brigands; in Eure-et-Loir we read of a tribe of marauders "with chiefs, sub-chiefs, shopkeepers, spies, a barber, a surgeon, tailors, cooks, tutors for the lads, and a *curé*"; in the west of nine Departments, in the south-east of four, infested with the plague of *chouannerie*, not to speak of perpetual ferments in the region of the Pyrenees. Against this multitudinous and sporadic disorder spreading over forty-five out of the eighty-six Departments of France, a gendarmerie weak and partially recruited from retired Jacobins, a disheartened and feeble National Guard, civil authorities incapable, dishonest, and perpetually changed, could effect but little. Everywhere there were crowds of functionaries, but nowhere was there effective administration. The Justices of the Peace were elected, and served the faction to which they owed their promotion; the Courts were too much frightened to be fair; the Mayors were for the most part illiterate; the police failed to pursue crime; and in local no less than in central government fiscal disorder reigned supreme. The Revolution, having destroyed all the old corporations, legal, religious, and industrial, had left the individual face to face with the State, so that an extreme theory of collective control had been insensibly but logically substituted for the individualism of 1789. It was for the State to organise education, to tend the sick, to assist the poor, and to succour the orphan — the State, which was bankrupt of money, racked with political passion, and charged with the task of defending the national frontiers against foreign invasion. Thus all the

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functions of government were negligently performed. An ambitious educational scheme existed on paper, but there was no education; and hospitals, roads, and canals, indeed all public works, shared the general decay.

Meanwhile the Jacobin spirit, at once suspicious and tyrannical, still pervaded the rulers of France. There was no political liberty, with a legislature twice mutilated, with elections persistently controlled by government, and with a press supervised by the police. It is true that religious freedom was accorded in principle; but the State, neutral in name and profession, was in reality hostile to all forms of worship. A petty but effective persecution succeeded the coarser forms of violence. No church could summon its congregation by a bell; no priest or Bishop could publish an ecclesiastical charge, or wear his ecclesiastical raiment outside the sacred edifice. To bear a crucifix in a village street was a crime; and a priest was sent to prison for attending a funeral with a surplice hidden under his great-coat. The priest was indeed no longer required to swear the oath to the Civil Constitution; but an oath of hatred to royalty and anarchy and of attachment and fidelity to the Constitution of the Year III was exacted from him. Rather than so bind themselves, many Catholic priests deserted their churches and celebrated mass in the woods. All kinds of petty tyrannies were connected with the *culte décadaire*. All work was to cease on the *décadi*, save such as was pronounced urgent by an administrative authority. No shops might be opened on the *décadi*, no shops shut on Sunday. It is no wonder that the populace of France revolted against the Puritans of the Republic just as the people of England revolted against Cromwell.

Land had been liberated by the Revolution from feudal dues and tithes, from *corvées* and tolls; and it was in consequence better cultivated and more fertile than under the *ancien régime*. But though population increased during the Revolution and the peasant was richer than formerly, he was far from content with his government. He hated the new tyranny of conscription, the land tax, the personal tax, the tax on doors and windows, and the stringent measures by which these taxes were enforced. Above all, he loathed the religious persecution, the interference with habits sanctified by long usage and associated with all that was picturesque, gay, and emotional in village life. In the towns the economic situation had been profoundly altered by the events of the last ten years. On the one hand great misery had been created by the social dissolution, the outburst of barbarism, the war, the decay of the ports, the annihilation of credit, the depreciation of the assignats — misery such that 13,000 factories out of 15,000 were closed in Lyons, and at Bordeaux they had ceased to light the streets at night. On the other hand, the seeds of future economic advance had been sown by the abolition of the gild and trade restrictions. Hence, while big businesses

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went to ruin, many small fortunes were made, and the numbers of the proletariate were diminished.

Amid the disorder, the misery, and the vices of the time, there was one all-pervading passion — the craving for peace abroad and methodical government at home. Everyone was disgusted with the Revolution; but no one save the priest and the *émigré* wished to recall the *ancien régime*. The quarrel indeed was not so much with the principles of the Revolution, as with the men who embodied them; with the orgies of the Luxembourg, doubtless magnified in public fame; with the proscription of respectable citizens; with the violation of electoral freedom and the exploitation of France in the interests of a discredited faction. But the disgust, though real and general, was too inert to prompt men to action; and it was the most serious feature in the situation, that, though the administration of France was insensibly falling to pieces, no one had the spirit or vigour to mend it. A feeling of hopeless lassitude paralysed alike the official and the non-official world. Decrees were slackly executed; taxes were unpaid; and the intelligence of a French defeat or a French victory found the public listless and unconcerned.

The main strength of the Directory had been derived from the military triumphs of France. But in the spring of 1799 the tide of victory suddenly turned, and, while Jourdan was beaten at Stockach and driven across the Rhine, the defeat of Schérer and Moreau in Italy left the peninsula to the Russians and Austrians. The situation seemed nearly desperate. In spite of the bankruptcy of 1797, the Directory was without funds, having indeed an unavowed deficit of three hundred million francs; the royalists of the west began to move more actively, and *émigrés* were intriguing with Barras. On May 27 Suvóroff was in Turin; and an invasion of France assisted by royalist help from within seemed possible, or rather imminent. In the French army disgust at official incompetence became more and more pronounced; and in the cowardly and servile Councils a group of politicians was forming itself, which desired to replace the Directory by a more stable and orderly government, by means of a revision of the Constitution. The astute mind of Talleyrand, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the fluent and adroit pen of Roederer, were enlisted in the cause of the Moderates; and since the terms of the Constitution did not permit of a speedy revision, it was resolved to have recourse to extra-legal methods and to overthrow the government with help from the Directory itself. On May 11 the lot — not without a guiding hand, said a Paris rumour, elaborately contradicted in the *Moniteur* — decided that Rewbell was to retire; and the Executive was deprived of its most resolute and unpopular member. Who was to take the place of the retiring Director? There was one name upon the lips of all who wished well to the Republic — the name of the only man who had preserved a reputation for political wisdom through all the crises of the Revolution,

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the French ambassador at Berlin, the Abbé Sieyès. The Five Hundred put the name of Sieyès upon the list of their candidates; and on May 16 he was elected after three scrutinies, the intrigues of Talleyrand contributing, it is said, to the result.

No one had given more ample pledges to the Revolution than the man who had first made the Third Estate conscious of its rights and claims, who had helped to draft the oath of the Tennis Court and the first revolutionary Constitution, who had voted the King's death, publicly abjured Christianity, and served on the Committee of Public Safety. Of all the men of 1789 he alone preserved, or laid claim to have preserved, the principles of liberty in their primitive purity; and he had a reputation for inflexible purpose and high political doctrine which outweighed a poor physique, a voice harsh and thin, and a total absence of that easy good-nature which is so essential in the handling of assemblies. His political theories were abstract; his heart was dry; and, while his temperament was such as to shrink from the exuberance of life, his proud and narrow intellect flouted tradition. But he was convinced and self-confident, and possessed the singular art, remarked on by Sainte-Beuve, of baptising a situation in a pregnant and memorable phrase. His intelligence, which was narrow, intermittent, and original, was fortified by a genuine interest in political speculation and a hardy growth of middle-class prejudice. Hating the nobles, distrusting the priests, and despising the people, he aimed at securing a government of revolutionary defence, so contrived as to preserve his own party in power, and to exclude for ever the royalists and the Jacobins. To reconcile all the warring elements in the French State was a task which lay beyond his horizon to conceive. He had "lived" during the Terror by complaisance and time-serving, with the Voltairian philosophy bottled up in his brain, and vanity accumulating its dust-heaps within him. He emerged more exclusive than ever, his name shrouded in mystery. It was known that he disapproved of the Directorial Constitution, in the making of which he had not been consulted. It was believed that he harboured great constitutional schemes in that mind which was thought to be deep, because it was subtle, ingenious, and economical of its elusive treasure. Amid the small lawyers and noisy rhetoricians Sieyès towered as an intellectual giant, as "the most sincere and wisest republican of his time." His reserve, his silence, which had once tantalised Mirabeau into paying him a splendid compliment, and his conspicuous past, made him the hero of the hour. It was notorious that he was never at a loss for views; it was believed that his views would save the State.

While Sieyès was travelling from Berlin to Paris, the elections to the Councils were taking place; and, though the official candidates of the executive were unscrupulously recommended to the electors, the incoming Third proved to be mainly Jacobin and strengthened the opposition to the Directory. There ensued a violent parliamentary campaign

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against the corruption at headquarters, which had starved the army, enriched officials and contractors at the public expense, and openly proclaimed an enormous deficit. "*L'épuration des fonctionnaires publics*," "*la punition des grands coupables*" were the battle-cries of the hour. On June 5, 1799 (17 Prairial), the Councils voted an address to the French people, in which the abuses of the government were denounced and a strict enquiry was demanded. After violent and protracted debates on the censure, the press was freed from police control; and the most absolute licence, suddenly succeeding a *régime* of vigilant repression, increased the volume of obloquy and excitement. When Sieyès arrived from Berlin on June 7, everyone told him that three of the Directors, Larevellière, Merlin, and Treilhard, had become impossible, and that their dismissal was indispensable to any serious reform. Sieyès soon came to the same conclusion; while Barras, sheltered to some extent by tact, good-nature, and prodigality, and perceiving that his colleagues were already doomed, resolved to assist in securing their downfall. The Councils opened their attack on June 16. It was discovered that the election of Treilhard was illegal, having been made within the year succeeding his membership of the legislature; and, though twelve months had intervened since the election had taken place, the Five Hundred declined to condone the informality and the *Anciens* ratified their decree. The place of the retiring Director was filled by Gohier, President of the *Cour de Cassation* and formerly Minister of Justice under the Convention, honest, narrow, and mediocre, a staunch republican in politics.

On the 18th (30 Prairial) the Directors addressed a message to the Councils, denouncing the manoeuvres of the English, the ruin of the finances, and the divisions in the State; and the deputies, seeing in this communication the menace of a *coup d'état*, swore that they would outlaw any who might attempt to violate the security and independence of the Legislature. That evening the recalcitrant Directors, urged by Barras and many members of the Councils, were forced to resign, to avert worse things; but though Larevellière, "the patriarch," never returned to public life, and Theophilanthropism became the laughing-stock of Paris, Merlin was destined to win an honourable reputation as one of the great legists of the Empire.

The revolution of Prairial was "a day of dupes." The Moderates had hoped to strengthen the hands of Sieyès and to promote the cause of constitutional revision; but in the struggle they had been obliged to accept the aid of the violent party in the Councils; and of the new Directors two, Gohier and Moulins, the latter a morose and incompetent general, were at once too stupid and too loyal to enter into their plans. The third, Roger Ducos, was a man of more pliable material. Without ability or convictions he would vote, as he had always voted, for the winning side. Sieyès indeed boasted that he had driven from the temple

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those who bartered and sold and dishonoured the Republic, and that the policy of France would henceforth assume a more decent and useful shape. But if the days of Prairial brought profit to any party, it was rather to the Jacobins than to the Moderates. The Directory was weaker and more divided than before; for, while Sieyès and Ducos were plotting its overthrow, Moulins and Gohier were staunch republicans, and Barras "the rotten" stood outside, determined to play for his own hand and to join whichever of the two sections should prove to be the stronger. Among the population at large the revolution of Prairial passed almost unheeded. What significance could there be in the substitution of three nullities for three incapables? Yet it was the beginning of the end of the Revolutionary period, and the first step towards the Empire.

But though the *coup d'état* of Prairial found the people cold, it left the Councils in a state of excited and perilous effervescence. A month of heated nocturnal oratory and unjust revolutionary laws ensued, and it seemed as if the country might relapse into the power of the Jacobins, who governed the Five Hundred rather by force of courage, discipline, and tenacity, than of numerical superiority. More than fifty newspapers defamed the government and poured their filthy abuse on everyone who took part in public life. It was in vain that the *Anciens* essayed to stem the tide of violence. The Five Hundred attempted to establish the principle that the Directory had no power to intervene in legislation, and maintained a Committee of Eleven, which, formed to satisfy the exigencies of Prairial, threatened to claim the functions of the old Committee of Public Safety. Fuel, both legitimate and inexhaustible, was provided for the fires of Jacobin eloquence by the financial scandals of the old government; and there were loud cries for the prosecution of the ex-Directors and their agents, two of whom, Schérer and Rapinat, obtained a special notoriety in these debates. The conduct of an unsuccessful Minister of War was naturally provocative of criticism; and the Jacobins saw in the calculated languor with which the prosecution of Schérer was conducted evidence of secrets which would compromise the government. Two bad and violent laws advertised the ascendancy of the violent faction and the disappointing impotence of Sieyès. The law of hostages (July 12), "a worthy sister of the law of suspects," authorised the administration to choose hostages from the relations of *émigrés* and *ci-devant* nobles in communes proclaimed as disturbed. These hostages were to be imprisoned, and, if escape was attempted, were liable to execution. For every murdered republican four hostages were to be deported and their goods sequestrated, and a fine of 5000 francs imposed upon all the hostages collectively. This barbarous law, which was declared applicable to twelve Departments in the west, and subsequently extended to certain regions in the south, far from assuaging, only increased the disturbance. "It is the

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government of '93," men cried, "and we will not stand it." Societies were formed to inflict reprisals on officials who tried to enforce the law; peaceable burgesses slipped off to join robber bands rather than expose themselves to its cruelties; *chouans* seized republican hostages; and in the south the epidemic of brigandage became more intense than ever. A progressive income-tax of a hundred million francs (August 22) was as fatal to property as the law of hostages was injurious to liberty, subjecting as it did all propertied persons to indefinite and arbitrary exactions. Commerce ceased; wealth was scrupulously hidden; the stamp and registration duties fell away to nothing; and only a third of the tax found its way to the Treasury.

In the hopes of rallying popular enthusiasm, the Jacobin Club was reconstituted under a new title, and with signal weakness was permitted to hold its meetings in the *Manège*, in the very hall where the three great assemblies of the Revolution had held debate. About a hundred and fifty deputies joined the society, whose debates were instinct with the old delirium of '93, mingled with a current of socialism or communism proceeding from the democratic movements of 1795 and 1796. In the Café Godeau near the Tuileries the anarchists spoke of slaughtering thousands of victims to the shades of Robespierre and Babeuf. The rumour ran that the Council of Five Hundred wished to re-establish the Committee of Public Safety; and it was said that at some dinner Jourdan, the most prominent general in Paris, had drunk to the resurrection of pikes. Rioting broke out again in the streets of Paris, until at last the *Anciens* plucked up courage and closed the *Manège*. The society then crossed the Seine and took up its quarters in the church of the Jacobins in the Rue du Bac—universally detested, openly attacked in the press, hissed in the theatres, but still feared and still formidable, with members in the police, on the staff, in the administrations, with a large following in the Five Hundred, and with the sympathy of two of the Directors, Gohier and Moulins. Three generals, Bernadotte, Jourdan, and Augereau, the first of whom was Minister of War, belonged to the party.

All that was sane and moderate in French opinion was ranged with Sieyès against the Jacobins of the Club and the Five Hundred, but the conservative reformers needed two things, force and prestige. Sieyès, who had seen Carnot and held communication with Lafayette, was not content with rallying all the Moderates to his cause. Like his predecessor in office, who on May 26 had appealed to Bonaparte to return and save them, Sieyès looked about him for a sword. But Bonaparte was a force too distant and perhaps also too incalculable to serve the turn of the moment; and the message to Egypt was countermanded. In his absence the destined saviour of the Republic seemed to be Joubert, young, chivalrous, heroic, and talented; and to him was entrusted the Army of Italy. If Joubert could beat Suvóroff in Italy, he would return

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to Paris, the laurels of victory on his brow, and assist the government to crush the Jacobins and to recast the Constitution. There was a feeling among the associates of Sieyès that France needed some form of constitutional monarchy; and Sieyès himself is said to have listened to the agents of the Duke of Orleans. Others spoke of a Prussian Prince, of the Duke of Brunswick, of a Spanish Bourbon, of a Protector; and Madame de Staël in an unpublished work proposed to establish Protestantism as the State religion. The idea of monarchy was in the air four months before Brumaire.

On July 16 Joubert left Paris, bearing with him the hopes of the Revisionists, and the confidences of some royalist agents; and meanwhile Sieyès, seconded by Cambacérès, the new Minister of Justice, and also by the Council of *Anciens*, strove to destroy the influence of the Jacobins. A contest arose between the Councils on a most vital point, the power to draft troops into Paris and its environs. If this were left to the executive, it would at any time be able to overcome the Jacobins of the Five Hundred by a display of force; and accordingly the Five Hundred decreed to deprive the Directory of this dangerous prerogative. The Ancients saw the purpose of their adversaries, threw out the clause, and gained a clear victory for the Revisionist party. But Sieyès' most important auxiliary was not the Council of *Anciens* but Fouché, the *mitrailleur* of Lyons, who on July 20 was named Minister of Police in place of the jovial and incompetent Bourguignon. Prompt, subtle, unscrupulous and bold, the ex-Terrorist correctly gauged the situation, and, seeing that the day for Jacobinical excess was past, was prepared ruthlessly to crush his former associates. A series of striking and effective measures showed that the government had gained a great Minister of Police. The military command of Paris was transferred from Marbot the soldier-politician to Lefebvre the soldier-automaton; the Jacobin club room in the Rue du Bac was closed, the club papers were seized, and sixty-eight journalists, representing some twenty-five newspapers, were deported to the island of Oléron. A great sigh of relief, mingled with some astonishment at the facility of the triumph, went up from Paris. But though the formal organisation of the Jacobins was destroyed, the Jacobin spirit was still present in the Five Hundred; and the first disaster on the frontier was calculated to quicken its activities.

On August 15 Joubert was slain at Novi; and all Italy save Liguria passed into the power of the foe. The last hope of saving France seemed to have perished, or rather the last hope but one. There was still Bonaparte. "*C'est Bonaparte qui nous manque*," wrote the *Surveillant* of August 30, giving voice to a common aspiration; and the Directory also had come to see the necessity for his recall. On September 10 a determination was reached to negotiate through the Spanish ambassador at the Porte for the return of the general and his army at the price of

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the restitution of Egypt. It was a formal stipulation that the Army of Egypt should return with its commander; and to this end Bonaparte was directed (September 18) to take all the military and political steps which his genius and the course of events might dictate. Before this message was delivered Bonaparte had left Egypt; and meanwhile the situation of the government in Paris was extremely critical. While the frontiers of France were open to invasion through the defeat of Joubert, the intelligence, received through English papers, of Bonaparte's check in Syria dashed the hopes of an oriental diversion which should relieve the pressure of the Coalition upon France. At the same time the vigorous measures taken against the press exasperated the Jacobin party; and the Five Hundred, divining in this procedure an impending *coup d'état*, resolved to parry the attack. General Jourdan, the victor of Fleurus, was an ardent and sincere republican, a man of high and simple character, whose great military reputation was adroitly exploited by his Jacobin friends. He approached Bernadotte, the Minister of War, and proposed the arrest of Sieyès and Barras and the establishment of a Jacobin government; but, as Bernadotte proved irresolute, it was necessary to fall back upon parliamentary methods. On September 14 (28 Fructidor) Jourdan got up in the Five Hundred and demanded that the Council should declare the country in danger and that a special commission should be formed to propose measures for the public safety. If the decree had been carried, the Constitution would have been practically suspended and France plunged in chaos. There was a free fight in the Councils, accompanied by furious cries from the spectators. The President was openly threatened with death. Lucien Bonaparte, the cleverest and most ambitious of the Bonaparte brothers, an adroit parliamentarian, prompt in speech and histrionic resource, attacked the motion; and, after the passions had exhausted themselves, the President took advantage of the general lassitude to move the adjournment of the discussion. If a vote had been taken that night, the Directory might have fallen.

At eleven o'clock at night Sieyès assembled his colleagues, and at once proceeded to discuss the removal of Bernadotte, whose loyalty was dubious and whose position at the Ministry of War gave him a special importance. Luckily for the Directory, Bernadotte had often perorated on the insufficient measure of support which he had received from the government, and on his willingness to retire. He had actually offered in the presence of Barras to resign; but the offer was insincere and had never been committed to writing. By the mere offer, however, he had played into the hands of the enemy. The resignation of the general was formally accepted, at the very moment when the Five Hundred were resuming their sittings. In the end, the motion of Jourdan was after a violent debate thrown out by 245 votes to 171. The Jacobins had organised a band of adherents in the streets, and

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blows were struck in the Place de la Concorde. But it was clear that public opinion was against the party of violence, and that there was no desire to see the executive authority transferred from the Luxembourg to the Palais Bourbon. The excesses of these debates only rendered the Legislature more despised and odious than before. But it was still regarded with fear, and the Directors nightly expected to be assaulted by the mob.

Towards the middle of September the horizon unexpectedly brightened. On September 19 Brune repulsed the Anglo-Russian army in Holland with considerable loss; on September 25, 26, Masséna won a great victory over Korsakoff at Zurich, killing or taking twelve thousand of the enemy and a hundred and fifty guns. Then followed the intelligence of the desperate retreat of Suvóroff, of his heavy losses among Alpine snows; and then on October 3 came brilliant news from another quarter, the defeat of eighteen thousand Turks by Bonaparte at Aboukir. On October 8 three new successes were announced. The fort of Aboukir had been recaptured, the retreat of Suvóroff in the Grisons was officially confirmed, and Paris learnt of eleven guns and fifteen hundred prisoners taken from the Anglo-Russian forces in the sand-hills near Castricum. While victory was in the air and France was rousing herself from the apathy and depression of the previous months, Bonaparte landed at St Raphael, near Fréjus. He had left Egypt before the call of the Directory had reached him, attended only by Monge and Berthollet, and a few of his favourite generals. When the news was announced (October 13) at a dinner-party in the Luxembourg, Moreau, freshly returned from Italy, turned to Sieyès and said, "There is your man; he will carry out your *coup d'état* much better than I."

From the olive groves of Provence to the boulevards of Paris the enthusiasm was indescribable. France had experienced no such thrill of emotion since the fall of the Bastille ten years before. Her greatest general, the aureole of victory on his brow, and invested with the glamour of an eastern crusade, beside whose romance all the admirable campaigns of Holland and of Switzerland seemed tame and domestic, had returned to save the Republic, to clear out all that was sordid and corrupt, to quell the hideous menace of the Jacobins, and above all to finish the war by an honourable peace. Even the Five Hundred caught the infection, and on October 21 elected Lucien Bonaparte to be their President. Nobody dreamt of empire or despotism. On the contrary, Bonaparte was regarded as the symbol of all that was most hopeful and glorious in the Revolution.

On the morning of the 16th the general arrived in Paris, attended by Berthier, Monge, and Berthollet, and repaired to his house in the Rue Chantereine, which was instantly rechristened Rue de la Victoire. The Directory, advised by Bernadotte to court-martial the man who had deserted his army, and broken the quarantine on the Provençal coast,

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shrank from so great an outrage to national feeling, and gave him a formal reception. Wherever he moved, there was a crowd eager to see and to salute the hero of so miraculous an Odyssey. The papers were studious to note his comings and his goings, the olive tints of his cheek, the unpowdered hair, the shy evasion of applause, the civilian frock-coat. All parties aimed at securing his assistance; and Talleyrand and Roederer, Barras and Gohier, Moulins and the brothers Lucien and Joseph, were frequent visitors to the house in the Rue de la Victoire.

But Bonaparte was determined not to commit himself prematurely, to study the ground before he commenced the action, and above all to prevent his name from being exploited in the interests of a faction. Going out but little, and then for the most part in civilian attire, dining with *savants*, discoursing to his colleagues of the Institute on the state of the ancient monuments of Egypt and the prospects of a Suez canal, he seemed bent on demonstrating the possession of civilian virtues and the aptitude for domestic affairs. Meanwhile he subscribed to all the newspapers, cross-examined his guests, and scanned the eddying currents of the public mind. His first idea was to enter the Directory and to effect the necessary changes with as little violence as possible; but to this course there were two obstacles. The Constitution had declared that a Director must have reached at least his fortieth year, and Bonaparte was only thirty. And it is probable also that, having sounded Gohier and Moulins, he had discovered a tacit or avowed opposition. It was necessary therefore that he should rise to power with the help of one of the factions. Réal the ex-Dantonist, Fouché, and Joséphine, urged an alliance with Barras; and ancient friendship seemed to point in the same direction. But Barras had not divined the scope of Bonaparte's ambitions, and believed that he would be content with the Italian command, while the Presidency of the new Republic went to another. At a dinner at the Luxembourg on the night of October 29 he suggested to Bonaparte the name of General Hédouville, and met a glance of contempt which dissolved his speech in incoherent stutters. "There is nothing to be done with such a man," said Bonaparte to Réal and Fouché. It was enough to decide him to embrace the party of Sieyès.

The coalition with Sieyès was not accomplished without obstacles, but it was recommended by solid advantages. Whereas Barras was personally discredited, Sieyès enjoyed a high reputation. Whereas Barras was surrounded by parasites, Sieyès was followed by a party, by Roger Ducos among the Directors, by the majority of the *Anciens*, by a faction of the Five Hundred, including the President and the Inspectors. Finally Sieyès, alien though he was in temperament, recognised and valued the intelligence of Bonaparte, saying of him with perfect truth that of all the soldiers he was most of a civilian, and that of the generals he was the only one whose intelligence balanced his will. On October 23 they met for the first time; after October 29 they were allies, using as the chief

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intermediaries in the secret plot Talleyrand, Roederer, and Lucien. On the immediate object to be obtained, the overthrow of the Directory and the revision of the Constitution, the two principals were agreed. But it is probable enough, as Lucien reports, that Bonaparte declined to discuss further eventualities. Such a discussion would have laid bare fatal differences between the Revisionists; for, while some wished for a King and some for a regenerated Republic, Bonaparte intended to make himself master of France.

Meanwhile Bonaparte accepted the outlines of the plot which had been prepared by Sieyès and his confederates. It was arranged that the *Anciens*, taking advantage of three articles in the Constitution (102, 103, 104), should vote the transference of the two assemblies to St Cloud, on the pretext that their deliberations were endangered by a Jacobin conspiracy in Paris, but in reality in order that the Revisionist movement might not be imperilled by the workmen of Paris. At the same time the *Anciens* were to entrust the command of the troops to Bonaparte under the pretext of securing the execution of the decree. Among the Directors, Sieyès and Ducos were of the movement; Barras would be induced to resign; and, as for Moulins and Gohier, they could be easily prevented from injuring the course of the conspiracy. On the second day the two Councils, deliberating in the midst of the troops, would be compelled to vote a revision of the Constitution. But as Sieyès had nothing ready, and — though there had been talk of a decennial Consulate, a Senate elected for life, and a system of indirect election — constitutional discussions would only have divided the party, it was determined that the Councils should be compelled to decree a provisional government during which the details of the Constitution might be elaborated. Three Consuls were to be appointed, who with one or two legislative commissions should draw up a Constitution and submit it to a *plébiscite*.

So general was the sense of unrest that even the Jacobin deputies shared the infection. Meeting at Bernadotte's house about October 31, they resolved that they were disposed to place Bonaparte at the head of the executive, provided that representative government and liberty were guaranteed by good institutions; and Jourdan was sent to open negotiations. Bonaparte flattered their prejudices. He would recover Italy, restore the sister Republics. They believed that he was with them. But in truth there was no section of opinion which he did not attempt to captivate. The party of the Institute, the old Encyclopedists, orthodox revolutionaries who hated the Christian religion, were charmed with a general who professed an admiration for Laplace's *Mécanique Céleste*, and was capable of describing to them the ancient monuments of Egypt. The liberals of 1789, even the royalists, placed their hopes in him; and, outside the circle of professed politicians, the auguries were favourable. The masses of Paris, temporarily excited by a stream of victories, had relapsed into incurious apathy. The troops, whose pay

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had been irregular, were violent against the Directory; but the temper of the fifteen hundred men who served as the guard of the Directory and the Councils was more doubtful, and, being for the most part hot republicans, they would not improbably act as the Councils required.

Among the generals, Jourdan might prove to be a determined opponent. Moreau, as timid and undecided in politics as he was valiant and expert in war, was content to serve under Bonaparte, whom he was perhaps not sorry to see drawn into civil strife. Great efforts were made to seduce Bernadotte, who was popular and influential; but, too ambitious and envious to play a subordinate rôle, Bernadotte refused to allow himself to be definitely enlisted, and his attitude was uncertain to the last. There was however little fear of the officers in Paris, among whom Murat and Leclerc, Lannes and Berthier had spread the propaganda. It was believed that Jubé, the adjutant-general of the Directorial guard, and Blanchard, who commanded the guard of the Councils, would come over; and no difficulty was anticipated on the side of Lefebvre. The great contractors were not unfavourable, for a motion had been voted in the Five Hundred which threatened their interests. The banker Collot lent two million francs. Cambacérès, Minister of Justice, Le Couteulx de Canteleu, who presided over the central administration of the Seine, and Réal, departmental Commissioner, were of the plot, the latter believing until the end that it would redound to the advantage of his friends. Barras, Benjamin Constant, Semonville, Régnier, Cornet, and Fargues among the *Anciens*; Chazal, Boulay, Frégeville, and Villetard, among the Five Hundred, were deeply committed and worked to secure adherents. But the number of persons entrusted with the full secret was limited carefully.

On 15 Brumaire (November 6) a banquet was given by the Councils to Bonaparte and Moreau in the Church of St Sulpice. A crowd collected to see the arrival of the Egyptian hero, and shouted "Peace! Peace!" as his carriage drove up. After a dinner, remarkable for the constraint and embarrassment of the guests, the general, who for fear of poison had brought his own bread and wine, rose and drank to the union of all Frenchmen, and then slipped away "like a flash of lightning." The next day he saw Jourdan, whose absence from the festival had been remarked, and might portend trouble. The Jacobin general professed himself discontented with the government, and offered to unite his forces with those of Bonaparte. The offer was declined; but Bonaparte assured Jourdan that everything would be done in the interest of the Republic and that he need feel no uneasiness as to the result. On the morning of the 7th the twenty chief conspirators of the Councils met at the house of Lemercier, President of the *Anciens*, and agreed that the measure transferring the Councils should be proposed by the Commission of Inspectors who were responsible for the police and the security of the Chambers. On November 8 the last preparations were made. Decrees, newspaper articles,

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posters, a song for the *Halles*, proclamations, and pamphlets were prepared; the officers were told to be in the Rue de la Victoire at 6 a.m. on the following day; and the troops were informed that Bonaparte would review them early in the next morning in the garden of the Tuileries. At midnight Joséphine despatched an invitation to Gohier and his wife to breakfast with her at eight o'clock on the following day. Fouché had already closed the barriers; and Réal, directorial Commissioner for the Department of Paris, had suspended the twelve municipal councils of the capital. The Directory had received due warning of all or much that was intended from Dubois-Crancé, the Minister of War; but, quieted by the insidious assurances of Fouché, they did not think it necessary to adopt precautions. For the conspirators it was essential to precipitate events, since on October 30 the Five Hundred had pronounced themselves in principle against the progressive income-tax, and further manifestations of a rational and moderate policy would deprive the plot of a valuable pretext.

The morning of 18 Brumaire (November 9) broke fair and mild. At 7 a.m. the Council of the *Anciens* met at the Tuileries; and Cornet, President of the Commission of the Inspectors, denounced in vague and pompous terms the existence of a formidable Jacobin conspiracy. This idle bombast passed unquestioned in an assembly already committed to the cause of the conspiracy — for upwards of sixty doubtful members had not received a summons — and a decree was voted in pursuance of the programme, to the effect that the Legislature was transferred to the commune of St Cloud, that the two Councils were to meet in the palace at midday on the 19th, and that meanwhile all exercise of their deliberative functions was forbidden. The third article entrusted to General Bonaparte the execution of the decree, and placed under his command all the troops in Paris, and in the 17th military division. It was further resolved that the general should concert measures with the Commissions of the Inspectors of the two Councils, and that the decree should be printed and distributed through all the communes of the Republic. Two Inspectors, Cornet and Baraillon, were despatched to announce the result to Bonaparte.

At a very early hour in the morning the Rue de la Victoire was crowded with generals, aides-de-camp, and orderlies. Lefebvre, one of the first to arrive, was instantly won over. "See," said Bonaparte, "here is the sword I carried at the Pyramids; I give it you as a mark of my esteem and confidence." Moreau, Macdonald, and Beurnonville rode up to offer their homage and to execute the orders which should be given. But all efforts to secure Bernadotte proved vain. He came indeed at the instance of Joseph, but in civil attire; and, when Bonaparte, having received the decree of transference, rode off to the Tuileries with his generals behind him, Bernadotte suddenly slipped away, saying to Joseph that ill-success would attend the movement. In a brief conversation

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Bonaparte had vainly employed all his arts to win over the republican general. But his defection was of no consequence. Mounted on a black and spirited charger Bonaparte rode along the boulevards and down to the Tuileries at the head of a brilliant cavalcade of fifteen hundred horse; Lefebvre, Berthier, Lannes, Murat, Macdonald, and Beurnonville were with him from the first: Marmont joined on the way. The Champs Elysées and the gardens of the Tuileries were filled with troops; and the *Anciens* were gathered in the palace to receive from the general his formal acceptance of the office which had been conferred on him. Standing at the bar of the Assembly Bonaparte, clearly ill at his ease, delivered a speech which was alike brief, peremptory, and vague. The Republic was perishing, and the *Anciens* had passed a decree which would save it. He and the brave men round him wished for a Republic founded upon liberty, equality, and the sacred principles of national representation. He swore that they would have it. "*Nous le jurons*," cried the generals, and the spectators thundered out applause. When Garat rose to point out that the general had avoided swearing fidelity to the Constitution, the President declared all further proceedings out of order, and the members left the hall with cries of "*Vive la République.*" As Bonaparte passed out into the garden to show himself to the troops, his eye lit upon Bottot, the messenger and secretaryof Barras. With a swift dramatic instinct Bonaparte summoned him to approach, and then, having listened to his message, launched out into a famous apostrophe, the lines of which had been recently suggested to him by the address of a Jacobin club at Grenoble. "What," he asked, "have you done with this France which I left so brilliant? I left you peace, I find war. I left you victories, I find defeats. I left you the millions of Italy, I find laws of spoliation and misery." The words were addressed in loud and ringing tones, not to Bottot, but to the serried ranks of the soldiers, to the newspapers, and to posterity. In a murmur he assured the emissary of Barras that his sentiments towards the Director remained unchanged; and then, mounting his horse, he rode out to review and harangue the troops and made his military dispositions for the day.

In order that the decree of the *Anciens* should be constitutionally promulgated, it was necessary to obtain the formal assent of three out of the five Directors; and a separate invitation had been sent out to each of the Directors about 7 a.m. by the Commission of Inspectors. Sieyès and Ducos, who in pursuance of the scheme had determined to resign, rode down to the Tuileries about 9 a.m.; but Gohier had declined Joséphine's invitation to breakfast, sending his wife alone, and it was probable that he, Moulins, and Barras would offer resistance. The desertion of the Directorial guard, the mutual jealousies of the Directors, and the refusal of Lagarde, the secretary of the Directory, to countersign any order which had not obtained three Directorial signatures, greatly simplified the situation. While Joséphine contrived to instil into Madame Gohier

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the idea that it was Barras against whom alone the movement was directed, Barras could not believe that Bonaparte contemplated the deposition of his former patron. Instead therefore of taking action, all three Directors passively awaited the development of events. Between 11 a.m. and midday Talleyrand and Admiral Bruix were ushered into the presence of Barras, who was hourly expecting flattering propositions from Bonaparte. They brought instead a florid letter of resignation which had been penned by Roederer in the early hours of the morning, and this Barras was brought to sign. Whether a sum of money was offered and accepted must remain in doubt, but Talleyrand was not the man to leave the situation in obscurity. On that very afternoon the ex-Director drove out of Paris escorted by a guard of a hundred dragoons. Meanwhile about 3 p.m. Gohier and Moulins arrived in the Tuileries, which had become the centre of political life and action in Paris.

The name of Gohier was attached to the decree, which was now capable of being promulgated with all the formalities; and the two republican Directors were pressed to resign office after the example of Sieyès and Ducos. In the midst of a heated altercation a letter was brought in to Bonaparte. "General Moulins," he said, "you are related to Santerre? They say he is stirring up the men of the faubourg St Antoine and intends to put himself at their head. If he moves I will have him shot." Moulins replied that Santerre was no relation of his and no agitator, and that he would not stir without orders from the government. "The Directorate," replied Bonaparte, "no longer exists. The Republic is in danger and must be saved. I will it. We can only succeed by dint of energy. Sieyès and Ducos are resigning. Barras has sent in his resignation; you will not stand out in the cold and refuse yours." Threats and cajoleries however made no mark on Gohier and Moulins, and the two men drove back unconquered to the Luxembourg. In their absence Moreau with a guard of three hundred soldiers had beset the palace, and the Directors returned to find themselves close prisoners in their official residence. Though Moulins managed to escape through a window in the night, the words of Bonaparte had come true and the Directorate had ceased to exist.

On the left bank of the Seine the Five Hundred assembled in the Palais Bourbon about midday. While the minutes of the last meeting were being read it was announced that an important communication had arrived. It was the edict of the *Anciens* commanding the adjournment of the Councils to St Cloud. Ere a voice could be raised in expostulation or enquiry, Lucien, the President, adjourned the Assembly, the majority of whom were unacquainted with the design. A strong squadron of cavalry posted outside the palace may have contributed to the success of the manoeuvre.

In the evening Bonaparte, Sieyès, Ducos, and their principal allies held a meeting in the Hall of the Inspectors. All agreed that the

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Directory should be suppressed, and that provisional consuls should recast the Constitution. But what precisely was to be the procedure of the next day? If the two Councils were amenable, all would be well. But if they were not? There was but little concert, and the meeting broke up without a definite plan for the morrow. Yet one important suggestion had been cast aside. When Sieyès urged that forty Jacobin deputies should be arrested in the night, Bonaparte roundly declined to accept the suggestion. Such methods, he said, belonged solely to the party which had destroyed France. But there was an incalculable as well as a terrible element in Jacobinism, and Bonaparte loaded his pistols before he went to bed. Meanwhile Bernadotte at Salicetti's house was proposing to the Jacobin deputies of the Five Hundred, who were desperately concerting measures for the morrow, that, as soon as they met at St Cloud, they should call upon him to share the military command with Bonaparte. The general of the Five Hundred would thus be able to check the general of the *Anciens*, and possibly to control the course of events in the interests of the party — a foolish plot communicated, it is said, to Bonaparte by Salicetti himself. So uncertain was the situation that Cambacérès and Chazal concerted an alternative government in case Bonaparte should fail. But there can be no surer index of the public feeling than the fact that in the very midst of the *coup d'état* the three per cents went up several points. The walls of Paris had been placarded since eleven in the morning with the adroit posters of Roederer, who spoke of finances ruined by the forced loan, of civil war stirred up by the law of hostages, of revenue anticipated, credit extinguished, workshops and factories closed on the eve of winter, and of a government which had not only abolished the Constitution, but had failed to secure liberty, property, or peace. In an adventure of this kind everything depends upon celerity. The Jacobins had been fairly surprised on November 9; and it behoved the friends of Bonaparte to push their advantage home before their adversaries had time to rally, to concert plans, and to comprehend the situation. But the plan of campaign was marked by two serious defects. Of necessity the operations extended over two days; and, when once the *Anciens* had decreed the transference of the Legislature, their constitutional powers of initiative were exhausted. Unless therefore they were prepared to act unconstitutionally — and by temperament they were prone to respect legal forms — the *Anciens* would be compelled to leave the conduct of affairs to the other Council, with its inflammatory temper and its hostile or suspicious majority. In the meeting held in the Hall of the Inspectors on the evening of the 9th, Lucien had given assurances that the Five Hundred would accept the revision of the Constitution as tamely as they had accepted the decree of transference; and it is possible that, if a snap vote had been taken early in the morning, the prediction would have proved true. But, doubtless owing to over-confidence, the

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details were mismanaged. The hour for the meeting of the Councils had been fixed for midday, which was later than was wise; and, when the members assembled, between 8 and 10 a.m., they found the Park already filled with troops, and the Orangerie, the hall destined for the Five Hundred, not yet ready for their reception. Strolling on the terrace, or through the corridors, while the workmen were completing their task, the deputies discussed the situation, and as they talked their indignation grew to a white heat. What was this plot upon the pretext of which the Councils had been removed from Paris? What was the meaning of the troops who were already bivouacked in the Park? Why had many of the *Anciens* received no summons to the Council of yesterday? It was plain that there was an attempt on foot to force them to overthrow the Constitution. Thus, when at last, at 1 p.m., the Orangerie was ready, the deputies streamed in thrilling with excitement and passion, which Lucien, with his nasal voice, and his face disfigured with glasses, was utterly unable to still. The proceedings were opened by Gaudin, one of the conspirators, who proposed that a small commission should be formed to report on the situation of the Republic and to concert measures for the public safety, and that proceedings should be adjourned until the report had been received. Wild cries saluted a proposition which was clearly intended to assist the *Anciens* in the work of subversion. "The Constitution first," shouted Delbrel, "the Constitution or death. The bayonets do not frighten us; we are free here." While the room resounded with shouts of "No Dictatorship," "Down with the Dictators," Grandmaison got up to propose that the members of the Council should individually renew their oath to the Constitution. The whole Assembly rose to its feet with cries of "*Vive la République, Vive la Constitution*"; and the motion, so flattering to the theatrical tastes of French demagogues, was carried by acclamation. For the space of two hours member after member stepped up to the tribune, extended his arm and took the oath; and this operation, futile in itself and especially fatal to the Jacobin cause, was protracted until hard upon four o'clock.

Meanwhile the *Anciens* had opened their sessions in the Gallery of Apollo, a splendid room, frescoed by Mignard, upon the first-floor of the right-hand wing of the castle. From the first the debate gave promise of troublous passions and undecided wills. Savary and Guyomard asked why they had received no summons on the previous day; others demanded further details as to the great conspiracy. To avert the storm, Farges, his speech punctuated with murmurs of dissent, spoke darkly of nefarious propositions made to a general in whom the hopes of the Republic were placed, and proposed that the sittings should be suspended until an official notification had been received that the majority of the Five Hundred were collected. Meanwhile a message was to be sent to advertise the Directors that the *Anciens* had opened their sessions at

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St Cloud. This was at 3.15 p.m. A quarter of an hour later, news arrived that four of the Directors had resigned and that the fifth was under surveillance; and the Council reassembled to receive the notification, which had probably been expressly devised to prompt it to bolder courses.

Bonaparte, Sieyès, and Ducos were watching events in the hall of the Inspectors of the Five Hundred, a room on the first-floor of the castle, just above the entrance gate and not far from the Gallery of Apollo. Officers and deputies came and went, informing them of every change in the atmosphere of the Chambers, and in particular Lavalette, an aide-de-camp, brought news every five minutes from the Five Hundred.

The prospect became hourly more anxious. It was rumoured that emissaries had been sent from the Orangerie to raise the faubourgs; it was known that even the faithful *Anciens* were vacillating; it was announced that Jourdan and Augereau had arrived at the castle. Bonaparte determined to intervene. Marching into the Gallery of Apollo, with Berthier and Bourrienne to support him, he demanded and obtained permission to address the Assembly. But for once his nerve failed him, and his speech was broken, confused, and vague. The Assembly, he said, was on a volcano; he must be permitted to speak with the freedom of a soldier; he did not intend to play the part of Caesar or Cromwell; the Directors had resigned and the *Anciens* alone could save the country. As for the Constitution, it had been violated again and again and was respected by no one. Asked for the details of the conspiracy, the general improvised a calumny against Barras and Moulins; but it was clear that he could give no positive facts. A second speech made at the instance of Cornudet was wilder still, and ended with an undisguised appeal to the bayonets of the grenadiers. At last, nudged by Bourrienne and Berthier, he stammered to a conclusion, turned on his heel and, calling out, "Let all who love me follow me," quitted the hall, leaving his supporters among the *Anciens* confounded and perplexed by his unfortunate intervention. At the bottom of the steps, after sending a confident note to Joséphine, he turned into the passage which led to the Orangerie and suddenly appeared at the door, hat and riding-whip in hand, and escorted by four grenadiers. We cannot tell what was in his mind. Did he merely wish to explore the temper of the Assembly? Did he calculate that his appearance would throw it into a dishonourable confusion, or did he expect to dominate the course of its proceedings? At a later time he asserted that he wished to confound the Jacobins by revealing the overtures made to him by Jourdan. Possibly he was seeking in definite action some relief for tense nerves, without any clear idea of the purpose which action would serve. The Assembly, which was excitedly discussing the resignation of Barras when the plumes and uniforms glistened in the doorway, rose to its feet in fury at the sight; a rush was made for Bonaparte, and the gigantic Destrem aimed vigorous

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blows at the intruder, while the hall resounded with cries of "Down with the Dictator," "Down with Cromwell." Members leapt from their seats shouting "Outlaw him, outlaw him," blows were freely exchanged and, as the officers and soldiers standing at the door rushed in to extricate their general, half suffocated and half fainting, terrified spectators sprang out of the windows into the garden. It was a scene of vulgar brutality for which Bonaparte had been unprepared; but the best witnesses concur in stating that no daggers were raised.

A motion was now brought in that Bonaparte should be outlawed; and, if this had been promptly passed and an order for arrest issued to the troops, it is possible that they would have bowed to the will of the Assembly. But, while the deputies were confused and passionate, their President, Lucien, kept his head. With rare courage and tenacity he declined to put the motion; gained some minutes by resigning the presidency to Chazal; and mounting the *tribune*, spoke and argued until a cross current of fear shot through the stream of indignation, and the Assembly wasted precious time in discussing a *sortie en masse* to Paris and the removal of Bonaparte from his military command. Soon afterwards a new access of fury swept over the room, with fresh cries for the outlawry of the general; and Lucien, despairing of mastery, sent Frégeville, an Inspector of the hall, to his brother, saying that unless the sittings were interrupted before ten minutes he could answer for nothing. The folly of the Jacobins gave him time. Instead of putting the crucial motion, they disputed the *tribune* with one another, everyone wanting to speak, to make his mark, to propose a motion. When Lucien, obtaining a moment's audience, asked that his brother might be heard, there were cries of "No." Then, with a melodramatic gesture which momentarily impressed audience and spectators, he threw off the insignia of his office, and clung to the *tribune*, awaiting rescue. A captain of grenadiers with ten men appeared at the door, made their way up the hall, and Lucien followed them out into the courtyard, signing to the vice-president that the sitting should be dissolved.

Bonaparte was outside with the troops. After his adventure in the Orangerie he had returned buffeted and unnerved to the room on the first-floor in which he had spent the earlier part of the afternoon. Swiftly courage and resource returned to him. The deputy Fargues was sent in to the *Anciens* to prompt them to decisive action, and to stir their indignation by a picture of daggers drawn against the general in the Five Hundred. But the manoeuvre failed. The *Anciens* went into secret committee, and, resorting to the device of all weak bodies, named a commission to propose a report. Meanwhile a message arrived that outlawry had been voted in the Five Hundred. The news, exaggerated though it proved to be, precipitated the crisis. "Since they outlaw you, they are outlaws themselves," said Sieyès firmly. Advancing to the open window, sword in hand, Bonaparte called his troops to arms,

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descended the stairs, and mounting his horse rode out on to the terrace to excite the loyalty and stimulate the passions of his men. The country had been pillaged; his brave soldiers were starving; and when he went in to the Assembly to speak, traitors salaried by England had replied to him with daggers. A scratch upon his hand accredited a fable, which was industriously spread by Murat, Leclerc, and Serrurier. The linesmen and dragoons received their general with transports, and heaped imprecations upon the lawyers, to whose corrupt self-seeking they attributed their bruised feet and tattered uniforms; but the temper of the grenadiers of the Legislature stationed in the inner court was more doubtful; and, if Jourdan or Augereau had given them a lead against Bonaparte, history might have taken a different turn.

But the appearance of Lucien, if not actually decisive, put the issue beyond question. Calling for a horse and a roll on the drums to enjoin silence, he spoke to the troops as the President of the Council of Five Hundred. He declared to them that the majority of that Assembly was under the sway of a fraction of "audacious brigands" armed with daggers and "inspired no doubt by the fatal genius of the English government," and he called upon "the warriors to deliver the majority of the representatives." "These brigands," he concluded, "are not the representatives of the people, but the representatives of the dagger." It would seem that the troops still wavered in indecision, till Lucien, asking for a sword, pointed it against the breast of his brother and swore that he would slay him with his own hand if ever he attacked the liberties of France. The melodrama was cheap but effective, and the grenadiers were reassured and eager to march. At a sign from Bonaparte the drums beat the charge, and a column of grenadiers, led according to some accounts by Murat, advanced with fixed bayonets to the castle door, and then through the long and oblique corridors to the Orangerie. The gleam of the bayonets in the doorway provoked a scene of wild but brief confusion. Red-robed deputies leapt in terror from the windows; others mounted the seats and yelled abuse; others rushed to the *tribune* to make history or melodrama, while the drums were kept rolling in order to drown the clamour. But the steady pressure of the bayonets was irresistible, and in five minutes the hall was cleared. It is said that the commanding officer told the deputies from the *tribune* that they did not know how to make peace or war, and that they had nothing more to do in that place.

It was now past five; and, as the legislators of the last revolutionary Assembly of France were pursuing their devious flight through the park under the opaque mist of a November evening, and leaving shreds of their crimson robes on the orange trees, Lucien, whose readiness and melodramatic gift never failed him through the day, hurried to the *Anciens* to explain the situation. With calculated pathos he depicted the affray in the Lower Chamber, the daggers drawn on Bonaparte, and

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the conspiracy against the Republic. Quickened and encouraged by this intelligence, Cornudet's commission proceeded to draft the required decree, which named Bonaparte, Sieyès, and Ducos provisional Consuls, adjourned the Councils till February 20, and created an intermediary Legislative Commission formed from the *Anciens*, who acted upon the assumption that the other Council had dissolved itself. Between 7 and 8 p.m. the decree was passed with one dissentient voice, and the *Anciens* adjourned till 9. During the interval a remnant of the fugitive Five Hundred, varying according to different accounts from twenty-four to a hundred and fifty, were being gathered together by the emissaries of Lucien and called to the Orangerie. It was seen that the concurrence of the Second Chamber would give constitutional authority to the acts of the conspirators; and, when the Rump opened its sittings at 9 o'clock in the dim light of three candles, all the formalities were observed. Lucien took the chair; Chazal proposed a motion, which differed merely from the decree which had passed the *Anciens* in respect of the composition of the Legislative Commission, which was now to be derived from both Councils; and a committee was appointed to present a report. In the interval of its deliberations a vote was passed that Lefebvre, Murat, and Gardanne, with the soldiers who had acted under their command, had deserved well of their country; and Lucien improved the weary hours of the night by a third oration upon the legendary daggers, which formed the official apology for the use of force, and the resort to constitutional revision.

At 11 o'clock the Committee returned and presented its propositions. The Directory was to be abolished, and the provisional government entrusted to Bonaparte, Sieyès, and Ducos. The Legislature was adjourned till February 20, 1800, but 62 members of the opposition were excluded from it by name, and a commission of 25 members was appointed to act in conjunction with the commission of the *Anciens* in all urgent matters of police, legislation, and finance, to prepare necessary organic changes, and to elaborate a civil code. At 1 a.m. the measure passed the *Anciens*; and an hour later the three Consuls were summoned to the Orangerie to swear "fidelity to the Republic one and indivisible, to liberty, equality, and the representative system." Vague words denoted vague aspirations, but the dominant thought of the Revisionists was aptly rendered by Boulay when in moving the resolutions in the Orangerie he spoke of nationalising the Republic. At 3 a.m. Bonaparte drove back to Paris with Sieyès and Lucien, silent and wrapped in thought. It was 4.30 a.m. before the *Anciens* had named their commission; and the first streak of dawn must have been shining in the sky before the last of the legislators recrossed the barriers. Paris was calm and satisfied with the event. The story of the daggers had been announced at the theatres by the agents of Fouché on the night before; and in the morning the citizens of the capital read upon the posters how twenty assassins had

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attacked General Bonaparte in the Council of Five Hundred, and how his life had been saved by the brave grenadiers of the Legislature. Two days later the *Moniteur* recounted that Thomas Thomé, the grenadier, whose sleeve had been torn in defending Bonaparte from the blow of a dagger, had breakfasted and dined with the general, and that *la citoyenne* Bonaparte had embraced Thomas Thomé and put upon his finger a diamond ring valued at two thousand crowns.

De Tocqueville has said of the *coup d'état* of Brumaire that nothing could have been worse conceived or worse conducted. Yet it accomplished its object without the shedding of a drop of blood; and, as the Prussian ambassador in Paris pointed out to his master, it differed from all previous revolutionary days, in that it brought neither suspicion nor fear, but rather universal joy and hope. A member of the *Anciens* reflected the general feeling, when he told his constituents that it was not a case of one faction vanquishing another; that it was the Republic which had triumphed over the agitators, the French people who had triumphed over anarchy and royalism. The country was well content that the "lawyers' clerks" should return to their office-stools, and cease their sterile discordant clamours. France was tired of the revolutionary phraseology and the revolutionary legislation, of the oft-repeated formulae which had cloaked tenuity of thought, and of the feverish rush of decrees which had perpetuated discord and perplexed administration. The whole country was content to subscribe to the dictum of that deputy of the Meuse, who, in apologising for the *coup d'état* to his Department, said that of all the curses which can afflict the moral world there is none more terrible than the permanence of a body which ceaselessly deliberates and ceaselessly makes laws. Those who lived through the period which elapsed between 18 Fructidor and 18 Brumaire never forgot their sensations of impotence and despair. It seemed that the Terror had become a chronic malady, and that the virus of civil strife was too deeply set in the body politic to be eliminated even by heroic remedies. It was a Terror without the consolations of hope, unredeemed by great achievements, and leading to no salutory end. But in the hour of darkness Bonaparte returned, a brilliant ray shooting from the mysterious East, and the ugly shadows melted suddenly away. Here was the man raised above the ignoble strife of parties, the man of firm will, clear eye, and abrupt speech, who would clinch the Revolution and reconcile liberty with order. Men of every type concurred in his enterprise, aiding it either with secret prayers or overt act: soldiers from the Army of the Rhine, soldiers from the Army of Italy, men of the Mountain and men of the Plain, doctrinaires of the Institute, who denied God, doctrinaires of royalism, who affirmed the Tridentine decrees, peasants whose sole passion was for their plot of land, burgesses who cared for little but a quiet life, bankers who craved for enlarged credit, diplomats who wished to see amenity restored to public life, all who

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cared for peace, all who cared for social stability, all who cared for the glory of France. Little sympathy was felt for the fallen Councils. They had talked wildly and governed ill. They had not even made the long-expected Civil Code, or cured the desperate finance which had brought the monarchy to its grave. In the government of the Directors France had discovered neither virtue, intellect, nor wisdom. To be a Director of the French Republic was indeed, as Sieyès said, a trade above all others "terrible and infernal." Yet, though much was to be gained by the concentration of the executive authority, and much also by the suppression of extravagant political debate, the price was destined to be such as no one in France imagined on that November evening, while the deputies were rushing wildly through the park, and the fog was falling upon the last fevers of the French Revolution.

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CHAPTER XXIII

REVOLUTIONARY FINANCE

THE intensity and unanimity of public opinion upon public finance are strikingly exhibited in the *cahiers* or lists of grievances and suggestions which each of the three Orders in each electoral district compiled, in accordance with ancient usage, before selecting its representatives for the States General. These voluminous documents were reduced to some order for the National Assembly by Clermont-Tonnerre (Report of July 27, 1789). The nobility, except in five *bailliages*, agreed to surrender their pecuniary privileges, while retaining their honorary social distinctions. The clergy consented to renounce all their privileges, but desired that the debt of the Church might be taken over by the State. All three Orders were practically unanimous in condemning the financial system of the *ancien régime*. They demanded equality before the tax-gatherer, the public control of taxation and expenditure and of the public debt, and the establishment of a Constitution as a preliminary to further proceedings. Their proposals were not confined to general principles, but set out in great detail the reforms demanded; and the language employed by the Third Estate was often forcible and impatient, sometimes even menacing. On May 4, 1789, the deputies, after being formally received by the King, attended mass at the church of St Louis, where the Bishop of Nancy delivered, in the royal presence, a sermon, described by a contemporary journal as "terrible, against despotism, the luxury of courts, the prodigality of princes, and the depredations of ministers." The church rang with applause. There could be no mistaking the sentiments of the representatives of the nation in favour of retrenchment and reform.

On the following day the King opened the States General with a speech of which the main idea is financial reform. Excitement was at its height when Necker rose to make his financial statement. He proceeded to minimise the difficulties in which the government was placed. Brienne's *Compte Rendu* of 1788 shows a deficit of over 160 millions of *livres*. But 76,502,000 *livres* of debt redeemable in 1788 had not been redeemed; and the decree of August 16, 1788, exhibited

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beyond doubt the insolvency of the government by suspending the payment of interest as well as deferring the repayment of principal. Provision had been made in the *Compte Rendu* as well for this repayment as for 29,395,000 *livres* of expenditure classified as extraordinary. Necker removed both these items from the account, and after some minor adjustments stated the true deficit at 56,150,000. Both items were, however, properly chargeable to the year. Necker's method was the same as in his *Compte Rendu* of 1781: to throw all extraordinary expenses into the public debt, and to provide in the estimates of the year only for interest, without a sinking fund. There can be little doubt that he was further anxious to magnify his reputation and his influence by parading as a result of his eight months of office a reduction of the deficit from 160 to 56 millions. The 56 millions could easily be found. A new contract with the Farmers-general would increase the revenue by 18 millions; a further sum of 15 to 18 millions was to come from the customs payable by the Company of the Indies; the Crown lands, Post Office, Direct Taxes, etc., would yield an increase of 5 or 6 millions; and 7 millions more would be raised by abolishing the arrangement under which various Provinces had compounded for the payment of *aides*. Economies were to be effected in the households of Monsieur and of the Comte d'Artois (900,000 *livres*); the bounty on the slave trade (2,400,000 *livres*) would be abolished, etc. etc. "What a country, gentlemen!" he exclaimed, "where, without new taxation and by mere imperceptible adjustments, we can sweep away a deficit which has made such a stir in Europe!" "If the privileged classes pay their share of the national charges like the rest of his Majesty's subjects, all will be plain sailing."

For three hours the deputies listened to this harangue, overloaded with trivialities, such as the profit to be made by extending the sale of snuff to Britanny, and expanded by tedious platitudes, while failing to give any assurance upon the crucial questions of a change in the financial and constitutional system. Necker had shown himself, as Adam Smith had tersely declared, "a mere man of detail." His fatigued auditors were filled with disappointment, if not with consternation. It was no part of their intention to allow "the deficit to be swept away," until they had utilised the financial embarrassment of the government as a lever for organic reform. "The public debt," said Mirabeau on one occasion, "has been the germ of our liberties." Necker proposed to pay the interest on the debt suspended by Brienne. "He wastes our time," said another witness, "by proving that a nation like France ought not to go bankrupt, while he maintains silence upon all that is essential."

In the treatise which Necker published in 1791 upon his own administration he observes that a nation is not really free, until it obtains or resumes the power of consenting to or refusing taxation and borrowing, and of deciding upon and verifying all expenditure; and he declares that

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all these salutary changes were ensured before the meeting of the States General. In the light of this statement his address of May 5 was a fatal error of judgment. His admissions, that a loan of 80 millions would probably be needed for 1789, and that 172 millions were already consumed in advance in "anticipations" of the revenue of the next eight months and 90 millions in anticipations upon the revenue of 1790, revealed the hollowness of the suggestion lurking in his speech, that the King had not been obliged to call the States General together for financial reasons. They were, in theory, a mere consultative body. No proposal is made to them. They are informed of the state of affairs; and, now that they are assembled, they may usefully consider various topics of public importance, and favour the King with such suggestions as they may wish to offer. This theory was soon to be rudely upset.

On June 17, 1789, the Third Estate constituted itself the National Assembly, and on the same day passed as its first "decree" a resolution, moved by Target and Le Chapelier, proclaiming "all existing taxes illegal, as not sanctioned by the consent of the people, and therefore null and void in their creation, extension, and prorogation," but declaring that "the National Assembly provisionally and unanimously consents on behalf of the nation that they may continue to be levied as heretofore until the first separation of the Assembly, on and from which date the Assembly decrees that all taxes not expressly, formally, and freely accorded by it shall entirely cease in all the Provinces of the kingdom, howsoever administered." It was added that the Assembly, "as soon as it shall have fixed, in concert with his Majesty, the principles of national regeneration, will occupy itself with the examination and consolidation of the public debt, and hereby places the creditors of the State under the protection of the honour and loyalty of the French nation." This addendum was designed to reassure the public creditors—a powerful party, especially in Paris—and to fortify them in their support of the Assembly, in which alone they saw any hope, against the Court party.

On June 23 the King held a *séance royale* and made a declaration, of which the first six Articles may be thus summarised: 1. No new tax shall be established, and no old tax prolonged beyond the term fixed by law, without the consent of the deputies of the nation. 2. All new taxes imposed or old taxes continued shall be in force only until the meeting of the next States General. 3. No loan shall be raised without the consent of the deputies of the nation, except in case of war or other national danger, when the Sovereign may at once borrow up to 100 millions. 4. The States General will examine the financial situation and have such information as may be necessary to enlighten them on the subject. 5. The tables of receipts and expenses shall be annually published in a form proposed by the States General and approved by the King. 6. The sums assigned to each branch of the public service will

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be settled in a fixed and invariable manner, and the King submits to this rule the expenses of his Household.

There are here no guarantees for the voting of the budget or even for its annual examination by the representatives of the nation. The Declaration of Rights (August 26) and the articles of the Constitution (October 1) included these safeguards, and were, after much hesitation, sanctioned by the King (November 3). Other articles of the declaration of June 23 gave a tardy adherence to the principles of the mandate contained in the *cahiers*. The public debt was to be consolidated, and the pecuniary privileges of the nobility and clergy were to be abolished when voted by their Orders. The *taille* was to be suppressed, and replaced by extra *vingtièmes* or other taxes paid by all alike. *Franc-fief* was to be abolished as soon as the financial situation permitted. Personal servitudes were to be converted into money payments charged on the general budget. The internal customs were to be swept away. The *gabelle* and *aides* were to be reformed, and the taxes upon salt reduced. *Corvées* were to cease, rights of mortmain to be brought up, and provincial assemblies to be instituted. On the morning of this declaration Necker resigned upon a point of difference as to the separation of the three Orders. On July 4 the Assembly refused to sanction a loan till the Constitution should be established. On July 11 the King begged Necker to leave France; but the Assembly at once declared that Necker and his dismissed colleagues took with them their esteem and regret, that the new Ministers had not their confidence, and that "the Assembly will never consent to a disgraceful bankruptcy." On July 16 Necker was recalled and the Ministry reconstituted.

In his speech of May 5 Necker had informed the States General that, in the uncertainty which prevailed, taxes were being held back, and that over 80 millions of the current year's revenue from direct taxes were in arrear. The resolutions of the Assembly had in the meantime given rise to much misunderstanding. It was rumoured in the provinces that numerous dues and taxes had been swept away, that the people of Paris no longer paid *octrois*, etc. Ill-disposed, though often better-informed, persons lent their authority to these assumptions, and in many districts the fiscal barriers were destroyed, the officials put to flight, their offices pillaged, and their registers burned. On August 4 two great landed proprietors, the Vicomte de Noailles and the Duc d'Aiguillon, proposed and the Assembly decreed immediate financial reform. Local and personal privileges regarding taxation were to be abolished. Feudal dues were to be redeemed and personal servitudes abolished. Ecclesiastical tithes were to be suppressed, and the State was to take over the expenses of the Church. From this date the peasants ceased to pay even those redeemable dues of the *seigneur* which rested upon value received or were of the nature of copyhold rents; and the forcible destruction of deeds and titles in country *châteaux* was the occasion of much further

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rioting and pillage. These decrees of August 4 were sanctioned by the King on November 3.

On August 7 Necker urgently entreated the Assembly to authorise a loan of 30 millions at 5 per cent. to meet two months' expenses. He stated that twelve months before, on resuming office, he had found but 400,000 *livres* in the Treasury. Special expenses had been necessitated by the distress consequent upon the bad harvest and serious storms. It had been necessary to buy corn from abroad, and to find employment in national workshops at the gates of Paris for thousands of needy workmen. The taxes were not coming in, and receipts were diminishing from day to day. Smuggling was increasing almost unchecked. Local receivers of taxes were in some cases unable to meet the liabilities charged upon them. The situation was critical. One of the earliest acts of the Assembly had been to constitute (July 11, 1789) a Finance Committee, on whose advice they now assented to the loan but reduced the rate of interest to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. At this reduced rate the issue was a failure. On August 27 Necker wrote to say that only 2,600,000 *livres* had been subscribed, and to ask for authority to borrow 80 millions at 5 per cent., half the subscription to be permitted to be in instruments of credit already outstanding against the Treasury. Authority was given, but only 44,342,000 *livres* were subscribed, of which a moiety consisted of government obligations whose value had fallen below par. On August 29 the internal trade in corn, wine, and agricultural produce was freed from transit dues.

On September 16 the Finance Committee, taking up a proposal made by Necker on August 27, proposed to modify the rigour of the *gabelle*, and to reduce the price of salt everywhere to 6 *sous* the pound. The annual yield was at this time about 60 millions, and the Assembly hesitated to sweep away at once so important a branch of revenue. By a law dated September 28, the law relating to *gabelle* was much alleviated, the price reduced to 10 *sous* where it had previously been higher, and a promise given to abolish it as soon as possible. The loss under this law was estimated at 30 millions a year. Serious riots at once broke out in Anjou. The people refused to pay even the modified tax, and drove off the collectors by force of arms. The Assembly next voted the suppression of compositions for the *vingtièmes*. On September 17 Necker applied to the *Caisse d'Escompte* for a loan of 12 millions to pay the troops. The *Caisse* asked for the authority of the Assembly, which, after hearing Necker's explanations, sanctioned the loan. A week later Necker made a clean breast of his difficulties. He told the Assembly that he foresaw a deficit of 160 millions in 1789, and at least an equal deficit in 1790. The Province of Touraine had already opened a patriotic subscription, and the example had been followed by a few individuals and by some scattered parishes, without any appreciable result. Necker now proposed a *contribution patriotique* throughout the

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nation. Each taxpayer was to declare his revenue and contribute 25 per cent. of it to the Exchequer. The Assembly hesitated. One of the members exclaimed, "Catiline is at the gates!" "No, gentlemen!" cried Mirabeau, "Catiline is not at your gates. He never will be! But Bankruptcy, hideous Bankruptcy is there; it threatens to engulf you, your property, your honour — and you deliberate!" The proposal was carried. The deputies were anxious to liquidate the *ancien régime* and to work out a fair and effective system of taxation for the future. They looked to the past only in order to avoid bankruptcy, to the present as a period of transition to be hurried through by temporary expedients, and they proceeded light-heartedly to abolish existing taxation without much concern for immediate substitutes. On September 28 they swept away the *droit de franc-fief*, payable upon the transfer of "noble lands" to *bourgeois* owners — a sacrifice of 1,800,000 *livres* a year.

Ministers were now in an equivocal position. Their power was rapidly passing into the hands of the Assembly, while their responsibility was unimpaired. They requested (October 24) to be allowed to share in the deliberations of the Assembly, but their request was rejected. On October 10 Talleyrand proposed the nationalisation of Church property. The income of the Church was estimated at 150 millions a year, of which 70 came from land, and 80 from tithes. At 30 years' purchase the land should yield, it was urged, at least, 2100 millions, of which 500 millions might be used to extinguish annuities costing 50 millions a year, 500 millions to buy out the holders of sinecures who had purchased "judicial" offices, and the balance of 1100 millions to wipe out debt costing 60 millions a year. The nation, relieved of these annual charges, would provide 5½ millions a year for the clergy, and would abolish the *gabelle* and ultimately the tithe. On the motion of Mirabeau it was resolved (November 2) that all the Church property was at the disposal of the nation, which would suitably provide for the expenses of public worship, the maintenance of its ministers, and the relief of the poor, under the surveillance and following the advice of the Provinces. Each *curé* was to have at least 1200 *livres* a year, apart from his house and garden. On November 3 the *Parlements*, which were beginning to mutter, were suppressed till further orders. Mirabeau's effort to link the Ministers with the Assembly was defeated by a decree ordering that no member of the Assembly should be at the same time a Minister. This measure, aimed in part at Mirabeau himself, completed the confusion of financial administration.

The *Caisse d'Escompte*, founded in 1776, was a private banking company with a capital of 15 millions, of which 10 were advanced to the Treasury in return for 13 millions of Treasury bills payable in 13 months. It had the right of issuing notes, kept the banking account of government, and was the forerunner of the Bank of France. On November 14 Necker informed the Assembly that he was in urgent need of 170 millions.

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He proposed that the *Caisse d'Escompte* should be made a National Bank, should advance a sum of 170 millions to the Treasury, and should be authorised to issue 240 millions of national bank-notes. On November 23 the great chemist Lavoisier, one of the honorary directors of the Company, was called upon to explain to the Assembly the situation of the *Caisse*, which was in a dangerous position because of the excessive loans it had already made to government, by royal order, in violation of its statutes. Necker's plan was referred to the Finance Committee, which, however, reported its own proposals as if nothing had happened. Its report of November 16 (the second report is dated November 18) is the earliest document which gives the general views of the Assembly on the subject of the public revenue and expenditure, and deserves some attention.

In general accordance with the *cahiers* these reports propose a revision and reduction of expenses, the liquidation of all State debts, the maintenance of a few direct taxes, with a preference for a tax on the net revenue of land, the abolition of personal taxes payable to private persons or communities, the right of the people's representatives to vote the annual receipts and expenses and to allot the contributions between the several public services, as well as to supervise the ministerial use of credit. All payments were to be suspended till January 1, 1790, except the pay of the troops on land and sea, the service of the debt, and the arrears of pensions. Other payments were to be deferred for the scrutiny of a Committee. A report had been received from the Treasury (August 3), estimating the expenses at 531,513,000 *livres* and the Exchequer receipts at 473,294,000. The debt, excluding annuities and perpetual debt, was returned at 878 millions; and the deficit for November and December alone would amount to 87 millions. The abolition of the *gabelle* and *aides* would sacrifice 108½ millions of revenue; but 60 millions might well be raised from "moderate" duties on salt and alcohol. The Committee boldly "economised" 119 millions, on paper, of the estimated expenditure; but no adjustments of the figures could get over the lack of money to meet pressing obligations. On December 19 something had to be done to avoid bankruptcy before the close of the year. The Committee proposed, and the Assembly agreed to, the creation of a special exchequer (*Caisse de l'extraordinaire*) under the control of the Assembly, to receive the proceeds of the sales of national property, the patriotic gifts and contributions, and other extraordinary resources, out of which it was to pay the temporary debt, to reduce or extinguish permanent debt as might be directed, and to meet any special expenditure charged upon its funds by the Assembly. Church and State property to the value of 400 millions was to be sold, 80 millions to be borrowed from the *Caisse d'Escompte*, to which 184 millions were already owing, and 400 millions of *assignats* to be issued (December 21).

With the word assignats we strike the key-note of Revolutionary finance and may turn aside to give some account of their history. At

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their first issue they were of the nature of mortgage bonds secured upon the nationalised property. The Crown lands had been taken over by the nation (October 7, 1789), and a Civil List was in course of being settled (June, 1790) on the King. The real value of the property of the Church has been much debated, but need not detain us here. The essential feature of the financial operation was to "liquidate the *ancien régime*" by paying off its heritage of debt and oppressive charges out of capital so far as it was impossible to do this out of revenue. Purchasers were to pay for the property in assignats, and the assignats were, on their return to the government, to be gradually extinguished by 1795. The first question which arose was, should they bear interest? One of the deputies propounded the dilemma that the assignat was either as good as cash, in which case it ought not to bear interest any more than if it were a coin; or it was not as good, in which case interest would not suffice to keep up its value as a circulating medium, but would even create mistrust of it at the outset. It was decided that the first issue (400 millions) should carry interest at 5 per cent., payable to the last holder on the last day of the year; and, to avoid driving out metallic currency, no assignat was to be of lower denomination than 200 *livres*. On April 15, 1790, the rate was reduced to 3 per cent. and assignats were made forced currency or legal tender; such of them as were tendered as purchase-money for national property were to be cancelled and publicly burned, while others were to be destroyed by lot, as they came in, according to a settled proportion of extraordinary receipts. On September 29 the maximum of assignats was raised to 1200 millions; and all interest on past, present, or future issues was abolished. In vain Talleyrand, Dupont of Nemours, and other deputies pointed out the dangers of this course. Dupont called attention to the paper currency of the United States, which ten years before had issued notes guaranteed by the government, with its immense resources, its men of trusted probity like Washington and Franklin, and yet had come to such a pass that "a pair of boots fetched 36,000 *livres* of paper money, and a supper for four persons, at an ordinary cash price of 10 dollars, cost 50,000 *livres* in paper." Mirabeau overbore all opposition. He ridiculed their fears, argued that necessity compelled them to face any risk there might be in the experiment, and, above all, that the assignat was a political agent of the greatest possible efficacy for ensuring the security of the Constitution. "Wheresoever an assignat is found, there surely will repose with it a secret prayer for the credit of the assignats, a desire for their solidity." The holders, he declared, would wish to see them converted by the sale of the nationalised property, and would be necessarily defenders of the Assembly's programme, creditors interested in its success. The deputies were now on a fatal slope. On June 19, 1791, a further creation of 600 millions was authorised, and smaller denominations were introduced. The *gabelle* had been abolished

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March 26, 1790), and lay tithes yielding 100 millions a year (April 20, 1790) were redeemed.

It is unnecessary to follow step by step the further financial measures of the *Constituante*. In the ferment of its activity it had appointed Committees including, besides the Finance Committee already mentioned, which had nine sub-committees, a Taxation Committee (January 18, 1790) to draw up a new plan of financial organisation, and a Pensions Committee (December 31, 1789), to report upon and revise the pension list. Some idea of their labours may be gathered from the fact that the last-mentioned Committee divided itself into six sections, sat for 12 hours a day with an interval of three hours in the afternoon, and undertook the revision of 30,000 pensions. A decree of April 27, 1791, reorganising the public offices, stripped the Treasury of almost all its remaining attributes, leaving it merely to maintain and execute the law relative to taxation. Budgets and accounts were no longer to concern the Treasury. The Assembly was supreme and all-powerful in finance. Later (September 17–29, 1791) the Assembly took over the audit of accounts, with a central office of 15 members working under its control.

Some relief from these colossal labours was to be looked for from the creation of local governments. The municipalities and provincial Assemblies were entrusted with large administrative powers to deal with education, pauperism, highways, police, and assessments to taxes, to be collected by their nominees on account of the central government. Again and again Ministers complained to the Assembly of the laxity of the local authorities in protecting the interests of the Treasury. The Assembly exhorted them to show more energy, but in vain. They were unwilling even to call out municipal guards to repair the barriers for the collection of *aides*, etc. when these were burned or battered down by the mob; and nothing would induce them to incur the risk of riots and the certainty of local unpopularity by rigorous measures to enforce the payment of taxes to be remitted to Paris. The central government had no direct representative in their midst. Without any clearly defined head or centre of authority, they were themselves incapable of prompt and effective action. Symptoms of anarchy soon appeared. Upon studied neglect in the payment of direct taxes followed smuggling and frauds on the excise, and even pilfering. Timber was stolen from the national woods and forests to an alarming extent; and the National Assembly passed urgent decrees forbidding their sale and placing them under the protection of the nation. Purchasers of nationalised estates, after paying a small first instalment, cut growing or ornamental timber, pulled down buildings and sold the materials, and gave up their bargains before the next instalment became due, thus making a considerable profit at the expense of serious dilapidations. The repeal of important taxes without the immediate substitution of new sources of revenue, the failure to collect the taxes which remained due, and the increase of expenditure

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under the *Constituante* throw the deficits of the *ancien régime* into the shade.

It might be supposed that this decrease of taxation afforded, at any rate, a corresponding relief to the people, many of whom—impoverished by the *ancien régime* and suffering from a bad harvest—were much in need of a breathing space. The Finance Committee reported on October 13, 1790, that the deficit of the last three months of the year was likely to amount to 134 millions, only 96 millions of revenue coming in instead of the expected 230, owing to the "perishing of different sources of revenue." They continue: "What does the people gain by this reduction? Nothing. Fraud alone enriches itself at the expense of the Treasury, and the innkeeper sells his liquor not a whit cheaper to the miserable creature whom it entices," although the duty is unpaid. The patriotic contribution of one-fourth of the net revenue of the people, spread over three years, was estimated to produce 500 millions in all, or not less than 150 millions a year. In the six months ending March 8, 1790, the patriotic gift had yielded 1,042,000 *livres*; and a further sum of two millions was expected in the next six months. On July 24, 1790, Necker presented to the Assembly an account from May 1, 1789, to April 30, 1790, in which the patriotic contribution figures at 9,721,000 *livres*. The normal expenses of the period (519 millions) had exceeded the ordinary receipts by 163 millions, and the extraordinary expenses had amounted to 209 millions, mainly for the extinction of temporary borrowings. The expenses had increased about 80 per cent. in a single year. On November 16, 1789, the Finance Committee had estimated the receipts in 1790 at 445,749,000, and the expenses at 412,333,492 *livres*. On March 6, 1790, Necker predicted a deficit of 294 millions for the following six months; and the Assembly, after reducing some of the proposed expenditure, called upon him for a further account.

Meanwhile current requirements were met by assignats, issued at frequent intervals. On May 29 Necker presented his estimate for the last eight months of 1790. The receipts are taken as 656,625,000 *livres*, the expenses as 645,210,000—a surplus of 11,415,000. The public remembered with derision the similar result in his *Compte Rendu* of 1781—satirised as the *conte bleu* or blue fairy-book, from the colour of its wrapper—and the Assembly treated the report with studied neglect. 380 millions of assignats were reckoned among the "receipts." The patriotic gifts and contributions were estimated at 32 millions, and it was assumed that the taxes would now come in with regularity. In September the Finance Committee reported the debt to be 1,878,816,354 *livres*. Necker, who had repeatedly protested against the use of assignats to meet current expenditure, resigned his office (September 3). The Assembly had lost confidence in him, as a man unable to rise to the height of altered circumstances, and viewed his departure with indifference. Towards the close of the year appeared Calonne's book, *L'État de la France à present*

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et à venir, in which he criticised fiercely the financial situation and the financial plans of the Assembly. The book created a great sensation, but had no influence upon the march of events. Five millions of revenue were abandoned by the suppression (October 31) of the *traites*; further public works were started for the relief of the unemployed; special war credits were opened to provide for apprehended hostilities with England or for the possible intervention of foreign Powers; and assignats were issued as required.

The taxes of the future were suggested by the Finance Committee on September 11: a *contribution foncière* of 300 millions to be levied on land-owners, upon their average net revenues for the last 15 years (not to exceed one-sixtieth of net revenue), the assessments to be made and the amounts collected in each case by the local authorities (enacted December 1, 1790); and a *contribution mobilière* (January 13, 1791) on moveable property, estimated to produce 66 millions, under five heads: a poll tax, taxes on domestic servants, on pleasure-horses, on salaries (5 per cent. on income as "presumed" from rent), and on dwelling-houses (3 per cent. of presumed income). The stamp duties were to be adjusted and reduced; and the debts of the *pays d'états* (162 millions) incurred on the royal service were added to the national debt.

The budget of 1791 is estimated (February 6) at 582 millions on both sides of the account, of which 60 millions came from the *Caisse de l'extraordinaire* and 55 millions from the sale of salt and tobacco in hand. The actual receipts and expenses are nowhere to be precisely ascertained. Partial, confused, and conflicting accounts were presented from time to time. "We would give a good deal," says Stourm, "to be able to reconstruct the budgets of this period. But no one will ever succeed in doing so, even approximately." All deficiencies are met by frequent "votes on account" of assignats representing capital resources. "In the last resort," said Mirabeau at the Assembly, "one hears but this, 'I have so much: I need so much.' And the Assembly makes answer, 'How have you so much? Why do you need so much?'" It must be added that these questions received no adequate reply. When the *Cour des Comptes* was abolished (September 3, 1790) some of its accounts were as much as 18 years in arrear, and a large number had been outstanding for ten years or upwards. Ramel (Minister of Finance, 1796–9) expresses the opinion that the regular receipts of government from taxation, year by year, during the *régime* of paper-money, did not exceed 300 millions, paid by those who could or would. The conservative party unsuccessfully endeavoured to force the Finance Committee to lay before the Assembly, prior to its dissolution, accounts of income and expenditure for its term of office, and a statement of the present financial position. On the last day of its existence (September 30, 1790) there were in hand 35 millions; and 346 millions of assignats remained unissued out of the authorised total of 1800 millions.

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The Constituent Assembly had "muddled through" at an enormous cost. It left the nation with adequate guarantees of popular financial control, with a unified and levelled field of public finance, and achieved the extinction of unjust and oppressive taxation. It gave earnest of a desire for economy in expenditure, and for the reduction, as rapidly as possible, of public debt. It has been made the object of much indiscriminate abuse as confiscating and extravagant. Extravagant it was not, except that it afforded an illustration of the truth that for governments, as for individuals, nothing is so expensive as to be short of money. No one can read its debates without being struck by its consistent desire for fairness in compensating the legatees of the old system. Circumstances were sometimes too strong for it. The refusal of the peasants to pay or redeem their feudal dues classified by the Assembly as "redeemable" only proved that the deputies were in advance of the moral sense of their constituents. A Leasehold Enfranchisement Act is not an Act of confiscation when it lays down terms of purchase which the leaseholders actively or passively refuse to carry out while successfully ignoring the obligations of their leases. The pension revisions, which come nearest in substance to harshness and oppression, are unexceptionable in point of form. Royal pensions were always a matter of grace and favour. Long and faithful public service established no legal claim to one of these. They might be stopped or reduced at any time, as the financial situation might require. The *Livre Rouge* was only communicated to the Pensions Committee after much objection on Necker's part, and was finally delivered to them with the condition that the expenses of the King's predecessors should not be examined. The report of the Committee has been criticised on the grounds that it lacked a sense of proportion, fastening *ad invidiam* upon trivial abuses; that it confounded pensions which were really bounty with those which were deferred payment for past services—or even payment for present services, *e.g.* to guardians of royal residences; that the indiscriminate reduction of the large pensions was unjust, and the temporary suspension of smaller pensions, pending revision, an act of cruelty to old soldiers and other needy veterans of the State. The decree of January 1, 1790, ordered all arrears of pension to date to be paid; but no payment was to be at a higher rate than 3000 *livres* a year, unless the pensioner was 70 years of age or over, in which case he might be paid up to a yearly rate of 12,000 *livres*. Camus, the president and reporter of the Committee, showed himself particularly anxious to secure the continuance of small pensions which had been duly earned. And the decree above mentioned is an example, at all events, of discrimination. The Committee put the claims of public servants to pension upon a legal footing, and revised in a democratic and utilitarian spirit the large pensions previously granted from year to year by the King. In this matter they need little defence.

Apart from such criticism, however, the financial blunders of the

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Constituent Assembly were sufficiently grave. Anxious, almost compelled, to do everything at once, the Assembly weakened the arm of the executive at a time when it needed strengthening. To this jealous check, paralysing the public service, was largely due the falling off of revenue, which combined with other causes to lead the State into further danger. The Treasury was deprived of its resources by the repeal of existing taxes, before new taxes were put in their place. The nationalisation of Church and Crown property was effected in a crude and foolish manner. To fling such masses of land upon the market at one time, and at such a time, was senseless, and ought not to have been regarded as inevitable. The issue of assignats was an insidious and a dangerous measure even at the outset. But if they had been limited in their amount to the saleable value of the nationalised property, and promptly withdrawn from circulation *pari passu* with the sales, they might not have seriously depreciated. Even so the proceeds should have been regarded as extraordinary resources, not available for meeting the current expenses of the year, which in times of peace should have been met out of current revenue. Unhappily, with this fund at its back, the Assembly drew upon it with frequency to meet ordinary expenditure, and bequeathed this fatal facility to its successors, with the result that new issues inflated the currency beyond any possibility of redemption.

An eminent writer has commented with severity upon certain critics of the Revolution: "*Si on avait été sage!* those cry, who consider the Revolution as a futile mutiny. But then prudence itself was impossible." If, however, we look back at the history of the *Constituante*, it appears that it would have been as simple to appeal to the patriotism of the people to endure for a moment the continuance of "transitional" taxation of a normal character, as to institute a voluntary system of patriotic gifts and contributions. Had this been done, the nationalised property might have been realised without the resort to assignats, and the whole financial history of the Revolution would have been changed.

We have dwelt at length upon the measures taken by the Constituent Assembly because it laid the bases of the present financial system of France; and its successors present comparatively little of interest or importance to the student of finance, so far as innovations are concerned. The Legislative Assembly concerned itself mainly with the proscription of the *émigrés* and of the non-juring clergy, and with the constitutional position of the King. The Convention and the Directory presented occasional accounts, but no budget is to be found until the Consulate introduced firmness and order into public administration; and from 1793 even public accounts are wanting. The Commissioners of Audit, appointed by the decree of September 17–29, 1791, to work under the immediate supervision of the Assembly, performed their functions until the creation of a regular Audit Office in 1807; but they were hopelessly

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in arrear, and no proper authority existed for deciding general questions in dispute between the various financial officers. The Commission was reorganised by a law of June 24, 1793, and was called upon by the law of August 22, 1795, to denounce publicly malversations and irregularities, which continued however to evade its attempts to check them. "The incalculable losses undergone during the Revolution have never been brought to audited account" (d'Audiffret). In the fourth year of the Republic no audited account had been passed since 1787.

The most complete summary which we possess of the financial administration of the *Constituante* is contained in a report of the Finance Committee of September 1791, for the period May 5, 1789—August 31, 1791. In these twenty-eight out of the twenty-nine months of its existence the receipts were 277,851,125 *livres* of ordinary, and 1,162,404,040 *livres* of extraordinary revenue; the expenses, 1,102,852,387 *livres*, in addition to 211,211,615 of extraordinary expenditure, and 154,958,491 *livres* of repayment of debt. Over and above the debt inherited by the Assembly in 1789 it had contracted 3500 millions, of which about one-third had been paid off. Its apologists point to the Church lands, the Crown lands, and the property of the *émigrés*, as a proof that the assets of the nation were still in excess of its liabilities. It had decreed (September 17, 1791) the separation of the accounts for each year, their examination by the Assembly itself, and their publication (from January 1) at the beginning of each session. Each Minister sent in his estimates direct to the Assembly, which brought them together and drew up the financial programme of the year.

We come now to Cambon's financial statement for 1792. The total expenses are estimated at 827,551,476 *livres*, and the receipts at 856,981,853. The ordinary expenses are stated at 303,194,184 *livres*. The receipts include 281,591,138 *livres* of arrears of taxes. The ordinary receipts are estimated at 438 millions, including *contribution foncière* (240 millions), *contribution mobilière* (60 millions), and stamps (80 millions); but of this total 300 millions were estimated to be likely to be in arrear —a net receipt in 1792 of taxes for the year of only 138 millions! The *Caisse de l'extraordinaire* had disposed of resources amounting on September 22, 1792, to 2,632,538,116 *livres*, and had only 28 or 29 millions of paper left. According to a later statement of Clavière the arrears had yielded 198 millions, but nothing had been received in respect of 1792, and the balance showed a deficiency of 558 millions.

At the end of September, 1792, 2700 millions in assignats had been issued, of which 67 millions had been paid in again. 3300 millions additional were issued in the short space of seven months —400 on October 24, 1792, 600 on November 21, 300 on December 14, 800 on February 1, 1793, and 1200 on May 7. The Convention is responsible for the emission of 7274 millions. The Directory raised the total to 45,578,810,040 *livres*. This figure, officially stated in debate, was

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challenged at the time, but differs little from the result arrived at by Camus (45,481 millions). Ramel gives the amount as 48,478 millions, later authorities, after allowing for redemptions, as 44,577 millions. On February 18, 1796, 1167 millions in the hands of government were burned; and about 24,000 millions were outstanding when repudiation took place in 1797.

The average value of the paper as compared with silver is shown in an Appendix. It will be seen with what care the enormous and varying figures of Revolutionary finance are to be interpreted when the silver *livre* varied at from a little over one to more than three hundred times the value of its nominal equivalent in paper. The warnings of Dupont of Nemours were more than justified. A pound of sugar sold for 400 *livres*, a pound of soap for 230, a pound of candles for 140 *livres*.

To tender or receive assignats at less than their face value was made punishable by imprisonment for six months for the first, and 20 years for the second, offence (August 1, 1793), and ultimately (May 10, 1794) by death. This last provision was repealed after the Terror (2 Nivôse, 1794). Assignats of royal origin, which had depreciated 8 or 10 per cent. less than republican assignats in 1793, aroused the anger of government; and all denominations of them over 100 *livres* apiece, amounting to 558 millions, were demonetised (July 31, 1793), on the ground that aristocrats alone could possess such large notes. On September 5 in the same year the use of coin and the refusal of assignats were made punishable by death. On May 2, 1793, a maximum price had been fixed by law for all grain. The decree of September 5 minutely fixed the prices of all articles by a maximum schedule. To the prices of 1790 (the year when prices began to be affected by assignats) was added one-third, plus a profit of 5 per cent. on wholesale, and 10 per cent. on retail trading. This maximum was augmented by two-thirds (Vendémiaire, An III), and finally abolished 2 Nivôse of the same year. Its paralysing effect upon commerce was as great as any of its opponents could have predicted.

The denominations of notes had been reduced from time to time, to as little as 10 *sous* (*Assemblée Législative*); and gold and silver became so scarce that when Napoleon set out (February 23, 1796) to take command of the Army of Italy, the utmost efforts of the Treasury could provide him only with a war-chest of 2000 *louis* in coin, which he took in his carriage. Arrived at Nice he issued an order of the day allotting 4 of his *louis* to each general under his command, for military purposes. "It was," says Bresson, "an enormous sum. For a long time past nobody had known what it was to have coin."

A certain number of assignats had been paid in for taxes or other government claims (*e.g.* the purchase of national property), while others had been annulled, reducing the amount in circulation to 36,000, and eventually to 24,000 millions. A law of 2 Nivôse, An IV, decreed that

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the total in circulation was not to exceed 40,000 millions, and that the plates and stamps were to be destroyed as soon as this figure was reached. This destruction took place on 30 Pluviôse, An IV (February 18, 1796), but the urgent need for more money induced the government to issue *mandats territoriaux* to the amount of 2400 millions of *livres* between March and September, 1796 (decree of 22 Germinal, An IV), which differed little in principle from assignats. They were ordered to be current at thirty times the value of assignats, which were to be converted into *mandats*. On the day of issue of the *mandats* (April 11, 1796) 100 francs in assignats were quoted at 18 francs in coin. The *mandats* fell to 5 per cent. of their face value by September 10, and gradually went down to 1 per cent. On May 21, 1797, all assignats and *mandats* in the hands of the public were demonetised. Enormous suffering was inflicted upon large numbers of people at various stages of this disastrous experiment; and the government itself incurred colossal losses by the discharge in depreciated paper of obligations contracted towards it in coin.

The chief financial events of 1793 were the consolidation of the Exchequer, by the amalgamation of the various *caisses* (*Domaine*, *Extraordinaire*, and the Treasury); a forced loan of 1000 millions from those having an income of 2000 *livres* and upwards (May 20) — a measure which temporarily raised the value of the assignats — and the great operation known as the opening of the *Grand Livre* (August 24). This measure, proposed by Cambon, was designed to consolidate the public debt by cancelling the stock issued under various conditions prior to the Revolution, and issuing in its place a new stock of uniform character, so that all the fund-holders should hold stock of the revolutionary government and feel, like Mirabeau's holder of assignats, interested in its stability. Every fund-holder was to be inscribed in the Great Book or register of the public debt for the amount due to him every year; and the service of the debt was thus unified and simplified. The occasion was taken to summarise the various debt charges. Ordinary borrowings being capitalised at 5 per cent. and annuities at 10 per cent., the total was stated at 6,626,400,000 *livres*.

Holders of old debt who neglected to present their certificates for exchange, or to collect their arrears of interest, found themselves penalised by the successive reduction of arrears to 80, 50, 20, 5 per cent., and finally by the cancellation of outstanding certificates and arrears. Interest was paid in assignats at their face value until 28 Pluviôse, An IV, from which date assignats were paid on the basis of 10 *livres* in assignats for each *livre* due to the fund-holder. On September 30, 1797 (9 Vendémiaire, An VI), occurred the famous "bankruptcy of the consolidated third." The debt inscribed in the *Grand Livre* was reduced by two-thirds, and *bons au porteur* (bonds to bearer) were issued for the two-thirds of capital wiped out from the debt. These bonds were receivable in payment for property purchased from the nation. They fell to

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70 per cent. below par at the time of issue, and were soon completely worthless. At the end of the Directory the annual charge of the consolidated debt was 46 millions, representing at 5 per cent. a capital of 920 millions, in addition to an annual sum of 29 millions in respect of annuities.

What was the value of the property nationalised by the French Revolution? Ramel estimated the amount at 3300 millions, but this is much below the mark. Eschassériaux valued it for the *Conseil des Anciens* in the fourth year of the Republic at a total of 5253 millions (specie value), of which 3195 millions were for Church and Crown lands and 2058 millions for the property of the *émigrés*. To this must be added 2000 millions from property nationalised in Belgium after its annexation. From the outbreak of the Revolution the position of the nobility had been increasingly difficult. Their titles and liveries were abolished (June 19, 1790). They were unprotected in rural districts from the violence of the *Jacquerie*. Such rights as were left to them were no longer enforced. The menacing attitude of the peasantry, and the hostility of government, caused many of them to leave the country — some to join the army of Condé, others to wait peacefully for quieter times. All alike were stricken after the flight to Varennes by decrees declaring them banished and liable to execution (March 28, 1793), and their property was confiscated (February 9 and July 27, 1792). The Terror attacked their families and ordered the confiscation of the property even of those who harboured the families of *émigrés*.

Reference has already been made to the evils which resulted from the insufficiently considered delegation of government functions to the local authorities (law of December 1, 1790). The abolition of *octroi* duties on the one hand, the responsibility for increased administration on the other, seriously compromised local finance. Municipalities were authorised to retain one-sixteenth of the proceeds of national property sold through their agency — the amount to be applied to the extinction of their debts, for which purpose they were also to sell all their property not set apart for common enjoyment (August 5, 1791). On August 24, 1793, all the debts of local authorities outstanding a fortnight earlier were nationalised. In return for the cost of collecting government taxes, etc. the ordinary contributions were augmented by additional *sous* to be retained by the local authorities. But the contributions (*foncière* and *personnelle*) could not be established in a day. The machinery of a new system of taxation, involving elaborate valuations and assessments, would have strained for many months the resources of a regular branch of the government service. The inexperienced communes were unequal to the task. The lists for the Year III were not completed at the end of the Year V. At the beginning of the Consulate less than a third of the lists for the Year VII had been drawn up. Many of these lagging payments were never recovered; and the municipalities, themselves

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almost devoid of means, neglected their new duties. Education was entrusted to their charge, but the schools had been generally sold with Church property, and 200,000 school-children were left without instruction. The highways were not repaired. Peasants who had grumbled at the *corvées* found themselves wasting more time and money in transport than they had previously devoted to forced public works. Turnpikes were set up to levy tolls on the English system. The assessment to the *contribution personnelle* and the tax upon luxury (July 25, 1795) were entrusted to "juries of equity" (*jurys d'équite*) by the law of August 1, 1797; but their proceedings, based upon favouritism and pique, were far more arbitrary than the worst abuses of the *ancien régime*, and gave rise to so much scandal that they were suppressed (December 23, 1798). The additional *sous* had already been taken over by government, which abolished the local budgets of departments and communes, but not of municipalities (19 Fructidor, An II), and resumed the direction of most of the national services. Hospitals and charities were nationalised (23 Messidor, An II), and the main lines of modern local finance in France were laid down by the law of December 23, 1798, authorising additions up to 17½ per cent. for local purposes. The State management of the collection of revenue was the first step taken by Gaudin (November 24, 1799), when at the beginning of the Consulate he succeeded to an empty treasury. Until this was done, the national exchequer was in an impossible position.

The general financial position after the third year of the Republic can only be summarily indicated. Ramel, with access to official documents and official advisers, was unable to arrive at any clear conclusions. So long as the paper-money was in circulation the accounts present an insoluble enigma. On 17 Brumaire, An IV, was presented a "sort of budget," amounting to 3000 millions of expenses in paper-money, the *louis* of 24 *livres* being at this time worth 3080 *livres* in paper. The principal financial feature of the year was a further forced loan of 600 millions, one-half being payable in grain. The actual expenses were returned at 618,512,627 *livres*, and the receipts at 561,820,176 *livres* (specie value). The estimate for An V (16 Brumaire) amounted to 1000 million *livres* (specie value), of which 450 was required for ordinary expenditure and 550 for war. The ordinary expenditure was subsequently returned at 568,421,555 *livres*, and the ordinary receipts at 340 millions. The estimate of the various government departments for the ordinary expenditure of An VI amounted to 643,436,581 millions, reduced by the *Corps Législatif* to 616 millions (voted 9 Vendémiaire). With the Year VI we have, says Ramel, who may henceforward be adopted as our most trustworthy guide, a return to order. The exchequer revenue amounted to 418,995,118 *livres*, in addition to 3,317,043 for the repair of roads, and 105,009,555 paid over to local authorities. 50 millions of arrears were outstanding, and the deficit of the year stood at 25,157,613 *livres*.

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The receipts of the next three years are stated as follows (An IX estimated).

	Gross	Net
An VII	728,071,441	539,079,892
An VIII	799,355,744	608,684,207
An IX	636,755,196	486,721,413

The gross "contributions of conquered countries" are 18, 14, and 12 millions respectively for these three years; 12, 9, and 9 millions net. In the Year VIII are included 5 millions from the sale of national property in Holland. The following table shows the items of principal importance, in net figures of millions.

	An VII	An VIII	An IX
Contributions directes	276	286½	276½
" *indirectes*	150	128	110½
Domaine	25	21	18
Sale of furniture and moveables	5	2.9	2.9
" national estates	33	40.6	30

The contributions from foreign countries were a considerable resource of the revolutionary government. Napoleon, in particular, was one of its most valuable assets. He collected the taxes in Italy, held individuals and towns to ransom, raised forced loans and war indemnities, commandeered enormous supplies, and even pillaged museums, art galleries, and private collections, to send coin and valuable articles to the Directory. Stores, horses, munitions of war captured in battle, were sold and captured again. He fed, clothed, and "found" his army at the expense of the localities in which they were quartered, and remitted substantial balances to the government in Paris. His proclamations declare that the French soldiers who brought the torch of liberty to oppressed humanity at the cost of their blood must at least be paid for their pains. Paid in gold or in kind, the soldiers drew comparisons to the disadvantage of a civilian government paying in worthless paper; and the fatal assignat thus enhanced the prestige of the military chiefs. Requisitions were not confined to foreigners. Ramel sagely observes that they are ruinous to individuals when they are not paid for, because then everything is worth taking, and ruinous to government when they are paid for because then everything is over-estimated. The expenses of government were enormous; 14 armies were on foot, covering a line of 500 leagues from the mouth of the Ems to the Adriatic, and some of the pay-lists show as many as 1,400,000 soldiers. Whole battalions, no doubt, existed only on paper, and serious malversations occurred in the War Office, and in certain revenue departments where officials speculated with the government money.

For some time public relief works were carried on, which were little more than simple charity. 40 *sous* a day were paid to the

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audience of popular societies. Succour was accorded to all the larger communes. At Paris bread costing 8 *sous* a pound in cash was practically given away to the populace. To meet all these expenses the government threw all the resources of the country into hotchpot. The salaries of the clergy and the civil list had ceased to be paid. Church property, Crown property, the lands, houses, goods, and chattels of the *émigrés* were seized. Forced loans and forced gifts, voluntary contributions in kind and money, perquisitions, the seizure of Church plate worth 45 millions, and of Church bells worth 15 millions, a sum of 500 millions from the countries occupied by the armies of the Republic—these are examples of the means of supporting the Revolution. It had "liquidated the *ancien régime*," but, as has been well said, it was confronted with the necessity of liquidating itself. The strong hand of Napoleon and the trained intelligence of Gaudin found little to change in the laws affecting finance; but not until the return of order and authority did financial affairs emerge from chaos. The worthless paper, assignats, mandats, bonds of half-a-dozen descriptions, receipts for requisitions, etc. were gradually destroyed. The 15 millions of *gros sous* or large copper coins issued in 1791, and the 150 millions of copper money, into which the Church bells not used for making cannon were struck in 1794–5, soon became reinforced by gold and silver. Industry and commerce revived with the establishment of security; and the financial blunders of the Revolution took their place among regrettable incidents in a struggle which the French nation determined to survive, at whatever cost.

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APPENDIX

I

Table of the Depreciation of assignats at Paris, showing the value in coin of 100 *livres*:

1789	November	95
1790	January	96
	July	95
1791	January	91
	July	87
1792	January	72
	July	61
1793	January	51
	July	23
1794	January	40
	July	34
1795	January	18
	July	—

Number of *livres* in assignats which could be purchased for 24 *livres* in cash on the 1st of each month:

1795 April, 238; May, 299; June, 439; July, 808; August, 807; September, 1101; October, 1205; November, 2588; December, 3575.
1796 January, 4658; February, 5337; March, 7200.

The figures, derived from official sources, are set out in greater detail in Bresson, II. 226, and in Ramel (*op cit.*). The provincial prices frequently differ from those of Paris. The last quotation on the Bourse was on 21 Prairial, An. IV. The official equivalents are usually higher than the market rates.

The reader may refer for a discussion of principles and policy with regard to assignats to Thiers, *Révolution française*; J. B. Say, *Traité d'économie politique*; P. Leroy-Beaulieu, *Science des Finances*.

II

For convenience of reference may be noted the following financial measures, many of them "fundamental" in French finance:

Tax on doors and windows, November 24, 1798.
Trade licences, created 1791, abandoned 1793, renewed the same year, amended in 1796 (6 Fructidor, An IV), finally settled, October 28, 1797, and October 22, 1798.
Customs tariff, July 28—August 6–22, 1791.
Transfer duties, 22 Frimaire, An VII.
Stamp laws, December 12, 1790—February 18, 1791. Amended by 9 Vendémiaire and 3 Brumaire, An VI. Basis of present law 13 Brumaire, An VII.
Playing-cards, duty abolished, March 2, 1791. New duty imposed, 9 Vendémiaire, An VI. The same law imposed a duty upon hackney carriages.
Tobacco monopoly abolished 1790. Duty of 50 frs. per 100 kilos. imposed 22 Germinal, An V, and an increased duty on manufacture, 22 Brumaire, An VII.
State lottery abolished 25 Frimaire, An II. Restored 17 Vendémiaire, An VI.

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CHAPTER XXIV

FRENCH LAW IN THE AGE OF THE REVOLUTION

On the eve of the Revolution France was consumed by an intense desire for reform; for reforms in government, in society, in the family, in the measurement of time and of space. The current opinion was that everything ought to be remodelled, public law, private law, constitution, and customs. Turgot forcibly summed up the revolutionary idea: "There is no reason," said he, "for maintaining institutions founded without reason." It is difficult for us to form an adequate picture of the extraordinary intellectual activity of those memorable days. 1789 forms the very atmosphere of our present life; it is the air we breathe, and it needs a real effort on our part to conceive men and affairs as they were at the opening of the modern era.

This new world, that the year 1789 revealed rather than brought into being, was hailed with unparalleled enthusiasm. For centuries the nation had been waiting for reforms; those long-standing grievances and sufferings which keep alive a people's need and desire for social regeneration had been handed down from age to age. The philosophy and literature of the eighteenth century reflect this condition of men's minds and sum up these aspirations, which they at the same time developed and strengthened. At length under their powerful influence fermentation began, heads were turned, imaginations inflamed. The ideal society, imagined by philosophers and men of letters, was to be realised here on earth; hatred and injustice, war and suffering were to be banished from the world; justice, virtue, and peace were to reign among men, who thenceforth were to enjoy equal rights and less unequal fortunes, and live free beneath the aegis of the Law. As to the means which were to regenerate society, a constitution, decrees, a declaration would suffice, since "ignorance, forgetfulness, or contempt of the rights of man, are the sole causes of the national ills." (*Preamble to the Declaration of Rights.*)

A whole generation trusted in this scheme and drank of this intoxicating draught; and there was joy, enthusiasm, and faith, such as had never been known — an enthusiasm and a faith that spread throughout Europe. Only a few of the higher natures retained enough freedom of

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mind, enough self-control, to be able to judge this great effort of humanity. The famous Wilhelm von Humboldt, when yet a young man, had already said: "Constitutions cannot be grafted on mankind like buds on trees. Where time and nature do not come to his assistance, man can make no more lasting work than bind together a few flowers that the first sunbeams will wither." Let the legislator therefore, Humboldt continued, avoid attaching himself to an ideal, to purely rational conceptions; let him be satisfied to steer the present towards the distant vision of perfection. Since this new constitution seemed to him above all else an effort of logic and reason, he considered it but still-born. "Will this constitution succeed?" he wrote. "To judge by all historical precedent: no! But it will awaken ideas and desires for new things and possibilities. It will leave its traces far beyond the boundaries of France. Between the conception and the realisation of an idea extend vast intervals of space and time."

In this sentence of death, pronounced by a man of genius, we can yet feel a tremor of the immense enthusiasm which had greeted the Revolution. But the judgment itself was too absolute: to a certain extent Humboldt was mistaken. The work of the Revolution was not purely rational. Philosophers and theorists, even when occupied in constructing the most abstract systems, while they fancy themselves wandering freely beyond the sphere of facts and of contingent data, still remain, and are fated to remain, the expression of needs, the product of circumstances, the outcome of their own time. The stately edifice which they rear to the clouds covers tangible realities, and their principles are but the cloak of facts. When the theorists of the Revolution demanded in the name of their principles the abolition of the privileges of the nobility, they did but finish the work of centuries, for the nobility was crumbling with age. When they demanded the abolition of local customs, and the introduction of legal uniformity, again they were completing the work of centuries; this aspiration towards a uniform law dates from the times of St Louis, and two centuries later it was formulated. When the legislators published the declaration, "None shall be interfered with on account of his opinions, even of his religious opinions, provided that their manifestation does not disturb public order as established by law," they were still giving their sanction to the patient labours of time, for manners had changed and did not allow of religious persecution. When they proclaimed the principle of the voting of taxes by the representatives of the nation, they were restoring the ancient right, for whose recognition the long and determined efforts of the *Parlements* had already prepared the monarchy.

In several parts of the work of the Revolution which we are about to survey we shall easily recognise this historical character, which is an invaluable pledge of vitality and durability. The part that the forefathers have played in the work of their children is too often forgotten. Certainly it is not to be found in all the laws concerning private affairs

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enacted by revolutionary assemblies, but it may be observed in them far more often than is commonly believed, and to this it is due that the revolutionary governments in those days of fever, madness, and blood contrived, in spite of all, to lay certain firm foundations.

Two aspirations widely different, indeed to some extent incompatible, which at this time took hold of all minds, must first compel our attention: the aspiration for provincial liberties, and that for legislative unity.

France, forced by her Kings to centralise, desired the restoration of local privileges, especially the restoration of the Provincial Estates. Her hopes were destined to be deceived; the powerful historic current which drove her towards administrative and political unity increased; and far from regaining privileges taken from them during the preceding centuries, the Provinces lost those which still remained to them.

Private law is in its essence changed less easily than constitutional law. Moreover provincial customs had retained more hold on public esteem than had the laws concerning public administration. Doubtless the penal code and procedure, which are so intimately connected with order and public safety, had by degrees come within the sphere of royal authority; but private law in its proper sense, that aggregate of legal ideas which corresponds to the modern Civil Code, had almost entirely escaped the royal influence. The Crown, although since the days of Louis XI it had dreamed of unity in civil law, had very rarely dared to act in this sense; and in 1789 the provincial customs still remained in force. But for a long time two great influences had been at work to weaken and slowly undermine them: Roman Law, and the custom of Paris. Roman Law, though its influence was everywhere felt, was chiefly operative in the southern Provinces, the region of *droit écrit*; the custom of Paris, although it also influenced the whole of France, held a more marked sway in the centre than in the rest of the kingdom.

The wish for unity in private law, though not universal, was widely felt. Magistrates and private citizens alike suffered from the great inconveniences of diversity of custom: a diversity which engenders, multiplies, and confuses legal proceedings. On the other hand, in the domain of public law, in which centralisation had already triumphed, it was the evils due to this centralisation which brought about suffering and complaints. And thus arose two somewhat incompatible desires, on the one hand that for political decentralisation and for the restoration of local liberties, and on the other that for legislative centralisation and for the unity of private law. The desire for local liberties was swept away by the powerful historic movement towards centralisation. The desire for the unity of civil law was realised to some extent during the Revolutionary period by the passing of a series of very important laws, and completely satisfied in 1804 by the enactment of the Civil Code. Failure in the one case and success in the other were both due to the same

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historical law, namely, the law of centralisation and unification, which in varying degrees has governed Europe for five or six centuries, and takes effect on any society that is growing old.

Among general reforms some of those which concerned private rather than public law were the first to be carried; and, as we shall see, they were passed with little consideration. As to official efforts to endow France with a uniform body of civil law, the Constituent Assembly went no further than the general principle; the legislators busied themselves with the matter, but no serious work of this kind was done until the Convention took it in hand. During the Revolutionary period, strictly so-called, the end was not attained.

Criminal law had been unified by the Crown, but retained its harsh and almost barbarous character. At the end of the eighteenth century it was the object of the keenest criticism. Even before the era of the Revolution Louis XVI had brought about an important reform in this province. The remodelling of the penal code and the simplification of criminal procedure were in 1789 among the most pressing preoccupations of the enlightened part of the nation. The Constituent Assembly, so early as the month of November, 1789, passed a decree reforming the criminal law; in September, 1791, it enacted a penal code and a code of criminal procedure. The Convention sketched a system of procedure and enacted a new penal code.

Civil Law. Land Tenure

Let us first review and classify the great reforms concerning private law which made way for the Civil Code. After that we will cursorily examine criminal law and procedure. The subject-matter of the Civil Code may be brought under two principal heads, the land law and the law of personal condition. We begin with the land law, premising, however, that it is impossible entirely to separate this subject from that of personal status.

In June and July, 1789, the delegates of the nation thought that their first duty was to provide France with a constitution. There was no reason to expect that the first important act of the Assembly would be the abolition of the feudal system. The decisions embraced in what is generally called the abolition of the feudal system belong in great measure to the history of private law. These therefore must have the first place in our statement. The famous night of August 4 was the starting-point for a series of decrees, which in the course of a few years violently solved the problem of land law and feudalism.

The need of simplification in matters connected with the land was strongly felt. Estates had been for centuries encumbered with different dues, the origin and reason of which were for the most part equally obscure to payer and receiver. Some of the best minds were working

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for the redemption of these charges. Boncerf issued a project of this sort which made a great sensation, but was condemned by the *Parlement* of Paris (1776), as the *Essay on the Redemption of Rent-charges and Dues on Land* had been twenty-five years before (1751). These absurd condemnations suppressed the books, but not the evils which were their subject. The evil became more acute than ever; for the land dues had become more galling to the tenants, because the proprietors of large estates, themselves for the most part in monetary embarrassment, exacted their rights, or still more often caused them to be exacted, with more rigour and exactness than theretofore. The detested *terriers*, which served in the collection of rents and dues for manorial lords, were being constantly elaborated, with a method and precision hitherto unknown, for the improvement of the landlords' revenue. The compilation of *terriers* became an art, reaching daily a higher degree of perfection.

The lords had to bear the weight of all the indignation which the efforts of their collectors and agents excited among the people; and as the fief was the most conspicuous land tenure, public opinion began to set strongly against what was called *feudalism* or the *feudal system*. The need for reform which filled all minds had its watchword: "the abolition of the feudal system."

What was the exact meaning of these words "feudalism," "feudal"? No one really knew. For the people everything that was bad and hateful was feudal. As to the learned, in order to distinguish what was feudal, they invented a formula which is both logically and historically false. We shall soon see the important part played by this formula at the outset of one phase of the Revolutionary era.

With the system of the land-law strictly so called there was connected a question concerning personal status. The ancient system of slavery, which had been by degrees transformed and softened down, had not entirely disappeared; in some provinces it was represented by *servage*, also called *mainmorte*. Serfdom replaced the ancient slavery; but by gradual transformation it had become almost indistinguishable from freedom. Much rhetoric has been spent on the subject of serfdom; but it may be said that by 1789 in most cases the question whether a man was a serf or a freeman was of much more consequence to his heirs than to himself; for the right of inheritance was different for the families of serfs and for those of freemen, being subject to more restrictions in the case of the *mainmortables*. And this was perhaps the chief distinction in 1789, between serfs and freemen. But public opinion called for the abolition of these last traces of ancient servitude.

Such was the state of men's minds at the moment when the delegates of the three Estates met at Versailles. The deputies, however, did not class these questions among their most important business. They wished to begin the regeneration of France by voting a constitution. Events forced them to modify the order of their undertakings. The capture of

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the Bastille reacted on the whole of the kingdom. It was the signal for a formidable effervescence, which rapidly spread across France. *Châteaux* were raided and cartularies thrown to the flames. The people laid its strong hand on this detested feudalism. After the taking of the Bastille the Crown had surrendered; after these riots and burnings "feudalism" capitulated.

On August 4, 1789, at the evening session, Target, a deputy of the Third Estate, proposed a resolution on the safety of the kingdom. "The National Assembly," so runs the motion, "considering that—while its sole preoccupation is to establish the welfare of the people on the basis of a free constitution—the disturbances and riots which trouble certain Provinces cause alarms and endanger the sacred rights of property and personal security, declares that the ancient laws are still in force and must be executed until the authority of the nation may have repealed or modified them.....that all customary dues and payments shall be rendered as in the past, until the Assembly shall have ordered otherwise." It is remarkable that the representatives of the privileged classes proved themselves animated by a spirit very different from that of this deputy of the Third Estate. Instead of attempting to dam the flood, they did not hesitate to remove all barriers and yield themselves to it. The generous Vicomte de Noailles gave the signal. After an improvised discussion in which the wise Duc d'Aiguillon, the prudent Dupont of Nemours, the impetuous Le Guen de Kérangal (deputy of the Third Estate for Lower Britanny), also took part, the Assembly, carried away by enthusiasm, in the course of a few hours passed a series of resolutions, which were officially summed up by the fateful words "destruction of the feudal system." Within a few hours all classes sacrificed their privileges in a positive fever of generosity, a delirium of abnegation. "The events of August 4," says de Tocqueville, "were the result of fear and enthusiasm, combined in a proportion impossible to determine." It took six days to draw up in their final form and to publish the resolutions adopted by show of hands in a session of six hours; and even so this six days' work was hasty and imperfect.

The decrees of August 4 open with a sentence to this effect:—*L'assemblée nationale détruit entièrement le régime féodal et décrète que, dans les droits et devoirs tant féodaux que censuels, ceux qui tiennent à la mainmorte réelle ou personnelle et à la servitude personnelle, et ceux qui les représentent, sont abolis sans indemnité, et tous les autres déclarés rachetables.*

The first article among the decrees of August 4 concerns directly land tenure and indirectly personal status. All duties and all renders representing serfdom (*mainmorte*) are abolished without compensation, and on the other hand those that are not connected with serfdom are declared simply redeemable. This distinction, theoretically very satisfactory, was practically much less so, for in very many cases the origin

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of a due was doubtful or unknown. For centuries there had been tenements called servile, for the possession of the land entailed a state of serfdom, but one from which the tenant could free himself at will by ceding the property. This is that "real serfdom" (*mainmorte réelle*) mentioned in the first article of the decrees of August 4. It was widely spread in Franche-Comté and Burgundy. How was anyone to understand why a family, which had received a free tenement charged with a perpetual rent, should still be obliged to pay that rent, while a neighbouring family, which had received a servile tenement, was relieved of all charges without having to pay any indemnity? But such was the result of those famous decrees. It would have been more politic, and at the same time more equitable, to proclaim the possibility of redemption for all duties and all payments, whatsoever had been their origin. And in fact in March, 1790, the Constituent Assembly revoked the decrees of August 4 and proclaimed that only the duties and burdens of purely personal serfdom were entirely suppressed.

The decrees of August 4, not content with abolishing all servile dues, did away with all feudal rights of jurisdiction and all exclusive sporting rights. They went further and attacked the rights of the Church; they suppressed the tithes due to religious bodies and many other tithes as well, declaring the remainder to be redeemable. By so doing they completely overturned the privileges and fortunes of ecclesiastical bodies and of many private persons. Louis XVI could not sanction these decrees without giving the lie to his own proclamation. He had solemnly proclaimed on June 23: "All property without exception shall invariably be respected and by property his Majesty expressly understands tithes, rents, feudal and seigniorial rights and dues, and in general all rights and prerogatives, whether valuable or honorary, attached to estates and fiefs." He had expressed a desire that the abolition of serfdom, enacted for the royal domain, should be extended to the whole kingdom, provided that indemnity were forthcoming. The decrees were in direct contradiction to the intentions of the King; we need not therefore be surprised at the difficulty with which the royal sanction was obtained. The terrible days of October witnessed the pressure and intimidation brought to bear on the monarch to force him to give his consent, and it was at last given on November 3; and the revolutionary work of August 4 was then completed.

The old land law was still in force, at least in the sense that all rents and dues not connected with serfdom were respected and merely declared redeemable. The dues thus retained after all constituted a large part of the value of the land: These the Revolution now proceeded to attack. A crowd of tenants, with no taint or trace of servitude about them, could not understand why their dues were still to be paid, while those of their neighbours, supposed to be serfs or descended from serfs, were simply abolished. Besides, there were many cases in

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which, as a matter of fact, the distinction could not be drawn. This difficulty helped to force the hand of the legislators; they thought themselves obliged to take more radical measures, which were at the same time more iniquitous and less justifiable. These we will now consider.

"The National Assembly entirely abolishes the feudal system," said the decrees of August 4. And yet the very same paragraph proclaimed the continuance, unless they were redeemed, of a host of feudal dues and revenues; so that in fact the feudal system was not destroyed. Now, what is a feudal charge? Jurists claimed to be able to distinguish between a feudal charge upon land and a simple charge upon land with no feudal character; and as a matter of fact this distinction was currently accepted. Every educated Frenchman, unless willing to declare himself incapable of distinguishing in what was admittedly a difficult problem, believed in the existence of feudal land-charges, as distinct from other land-charges not of a feudal nature; and public opinion disapproved only of feudal land-charges. As soon as the difficulty of distinguishing between the dues abolished by the Constituent Assembly and those which it retained called for new legislation, the attack was directed exclusively against feudal land-charges. The common man, it is true, was incapable of distinguishing the characteristics of feudal tenure; but lawyers claimed to be able to do so. However by glancing at certain dates we can see that this distinction was very difficult to apply. It was not till a fortnight after the deposition of the King, a fortnight after August 10, 1792, that these feudal dues were attacked; they were not even then suppressed, but were placed in a very uncomfortable legal position.

It was decided that in case of a dispute between the claimant of a feudal charge and the tenant of the land the burden of proving a grant subject to feudal dues should lie upon the claimant; in other words, all property was held to be free of feudal burdens unless proof was brought to the contrary (decree of August 25–28, 1792). This decision is important: it implies the absolute abolition of all feudal dues which did not originate in the concession of land. For there existed, as we shall see, a series of dues which did not originate in a contract, but were the outcome, as it has sometimes been expressed, of *féodalité dominante*, not of *féodalité contractante*. We shall return later to this interesting category. Dues originating in a feudal contract remained payable, but the onus of proving the contract lay with the landlord.

Meantime the Republic was proclaimed, or rather asserted. Louis XVI was condemned to death and guillotined. The Reign of Terror spread through France. The ancient Church of France was destroyed; all the ancient official bodies were prostrate. Only one ancient institution remained, weakened it is true and menaced, and this was feudal land-tenure; for no law had as yet simply abolished feudal land-dues. These

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were not suppressed till the middle of the Reign of Terror, six months after the King's death. It is the law of July 17, 1793, which proclaims that *Toutes redevances ci-devant seigneuriales, droits féodaux, censuels, fixes, et casuels, sont supprimés sans indemnité.* Any charges on the land that were not feudal were still retained.

Whence came all this hesitation and delay? Why were these feudal revenues to be the last tardy sacrifice offered on the altar of the Revolution? The explanation is very simple. In a great number of cases the tenures that were known as *fiefs* and *censives* did not differ essentially from other tenures. Though a jurist might consider himself capable of distinguishing between what was feudal and what was not, he certainly would be unable to say why feudal landed interests were less to be respected than other landed interests. Moreover the legal distinction is strangely deceptive; this was vaguely felt to be the case, and doubtless for this reason there was so much hesitation.

Thenceforth the tribunals were to search in darkness for the marks of feudalism. During the late Middle Ages, and even nearer our own time than that, judges had used a special method of discovering witches. They applied pins and needles to all parts of the body of the suspected person till they found some place insensible to pain. If they discovered this non-sensitive spot (which really exists in hysterical patients) they were sure of their witch at once. In the eighteenth century lawyers, and following them magistrates, had a means almost as good for discovering the feudal virus. They put this question: "Has the proprietor of the superior tenement a certain right, called direct dominion, direct seignory, or simply direct right over the subject tenement?" The whole problem lay in this one question. Learned lawyers had probed the mystery of feudalism; they knew that where the word "direct" occurs there was feudalism; and so the "*directe*" in these disputes concerning feudalism answers to the non-sensitive place in the trials for sorcery — but perhaps with a certain disadvantage, for it was even more difficult to recognise.

And what was this "direct right"? By one of those mischances that are only too common in the history of law, jurists had selected as the mark of a barbarous and feudal contract what was really a Roman term and idea; both idea and expression were introduced into legal phraseology by medieval civilians. To explain: in Roman law *actio directa* is an action derived expressly from a statute; *actio utilis* is that granted by analogy with the case giving rise to the direct action. *Actio utilis* is therefore an extension of the direct action. Romanists, Azo in particular, use the expressions *dominium directum*, *dominium utile*. We can see that these expressions are inspired by the terms *actio directa*, *actio utilis*; and that by direct dominion they understand the proprietary right which gives rise to a direct action; by *dominium utile* the right which occasions an *actio utilis*. It was in connexion with *emphyteusis*

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that these terms *dominium directum*, *dominium utile* were first used; the lessor of a long lease kept the direct dominion, the lessee received the *dominium utile*. There are many striking analogies between the fief of barbarian origin and the Roman *emphyteusis*. Medieval lawyers applied the terms direct dominion (*dominium directum*), direct seignory, or simply "direct" to feudal relations. These expressions conveyed the idea of a feeble right on the part of the vassal, and a far stronger right, ownership (at least in the eye of the law) on the part of the suzerain. But in course of time, the suzerain's right having grown weaker and weaker, the words were no longer consonant with the facts. Thus the importance of "direct dominion" lessened from century to century; at the end of the old *régime* the development was complete. The *dominium utile* was considered as the true ownership; "direct dominion" had ceased to be anything more than a sort of troublesome "servitude."

So this supposed characteristic of feudal contracts was of entirely Roman origin. But how was the "direct right" to be recognised? What needle could the modern lawyer use to discover the "direct right"? It was often expressly mentioned in the title-deeds, and in that case there was no difficulty. If it was not mentioned, lawyers were agreed that it existed wherever the tenant's land was described as a *fief* or *censive*; that it also existed when the due was described as *cens*, not as *rente*. Land paying a *cens* is encumbered with a feudal charge; land paying *rente* is encumbered with a non-feudal charge. It mattered little that the charge called *cens* might be identical with the charge called *rente*; one was feudal, the other was not. But the list of exceptions was formidable, for if the civilians had first spoken of direct right in the case of *emphyteusis*, we must add that they had continued to use it in the same connexion. And yet no one will claim that the Graeco-Roman *emphyteusis* was a feudal contract. Here we have therefore a "direct right," frequent in charters and in the drafts of notaries, which was not exposed to the attacks of the enemies of feudalism. This they could not but know: so they had to make another distinction and to recognise the existence of a "direct right" free from all feudal taint, which they called *directe privée*; they separated it from seigniorial direct right and agreed to respect it.

This tardy victory of justice and common-sense was not the first, nor the only one. A reactionary influence had been felt since 1795; it arose from two sources, the interests of private individuals and those of the State. Those private persons who had been despoiled demanded justice; and the State, having seized the possessions of the *émigrés* and those of the Church and thus come into the rights of the despoiled proprietors, was the victim of its own laws. On 15 Messidor in the Year IV (1796) the Directory sent word to the Council of the Five Hundred asking them to revise these laws, which had ruined many fathers of families and occasioned a loss to the Republic estimated at 120,000,000 *livres* on the

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basis of the value of currency in 1790. On 18 Ventôse, in the Year V (1796), Treilhard, making a direct attack on the work of the Convention, proposed to rescind the laws of July 17 and October 2, 1793, by right of which all charges on land tainted with the least sign of feudalism were suppressed without indemnity. This radical decision was not adopted, but partial measures helped to lessen the evil. In its rage against feudalism, incredible as it may seem, the Convention had been on the point of abolishing the rights of a lessor, even in case of a short lease, if the grant showed the slightest sign of feudalism. These decisions had ruined very many landlords in the west of France, whose estates were leased by a special contract called *bail à congément* or *domaine congéable*. "On such lines," as Lemerer very properly remarked in his speech to the Five Hundred, "it would be allowable to discover traces of feudalism everywhere, and by means of this marvellous discovery to invalidate all human contracts!" The law of 9 Brumaire in the Year VI (October 30, 1797) couched in halting and indirect terms, wiped out this injustice as far as *domaine congéable* was concerned.

This phantom of feudalism escaped the grasp of its pursuer. A distinction between different sources of income, treating some as feudal and in consequence suppressing them without compensation, others as non-feudal and so to be retained unless redeemed, could not rest on a serious and scientific basis. It would have been possible to find some less absurd distinction, but none would have been quite satisfactory; for feudal land-rights are at bottom proprietary rights and analogous to any others of this kind. Simple right of redemption for all dues would have been the only sensible and practical measure. France would only have had to follow the system adopted by Savoy, where enfranchisement had been in regular use since the edicts of 1762 and 1771; but this system was not adopted.

French tribunals for many years were forced to make use of the astonishing criterion, with which the reader is now acquainted, whenever they wished to put in force the absolute suppression of feudal dues, and consequently had to decide what was feudal and what was not. They had not at that time, nor would they have to-day, any other compass by which to steer their course than *la directe*, which an old writer, d'Argentré, has so well compared to a will o' the wisp. Before August 4, 1789, a notary, engaged to draw up a perpetual lease with the view of emphasising the rights of his client (the lessor), would not have hesitated to mention the existence of "direct" rights on his client's side had he thought this possible, or at least to use some phrase implying "direct" rights. From August 4 onwards — or to speak more correctly, from November 3, 1789 — this very precaution would have been the ruin of the luckless client; it would have occasioned the absolute suppression of his income.

Such were the rough and ready methods, which unravelled, or rather cut, the "*complexum feudale*" as it was called. The land was thus freed

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from the so-called feudal obligations which burdened it. Any perpetual dues not of a feudal character were henceforth redeemable (law of December 18–29, 1790). According to the lawyers the land started free and untrammelled under the new legislation. Let us not however exaggerate the force and extent of this new enfranchisement of the soil. Certainly, so far as individuals were concerned, the land was freed from all irredeemable perpetual charges and enfranchised from the feudal superiority. But what was its legal position with regard to the State? Had not the State a "direct dominion" over all lands? This is a question which history can answer. In the Middle Ages and the centuries which followed, land free from all superiority and all extrinsic charges was called an *alleu*. For more than six centuries the efforts of the lords and the King had been constantly directed to turning all such *alleux* for their own advantage into fiefs or *censives*; that is to say into estates burdened with some charge, service, or due. In 1789 the legislators, well pleased with their work, naïvely declared that henceforth all French land was to be *alleu*. But they forgot that the King, the overlord of the whole kingdom, over which he claimed a universal *directe*, had been for two centuries the most powerful adversary of the *alleux*; that he had from the first made them liable to payment of rents and fines on change of ownership, then to royal taxation, thus taking from them their essential character of fiscal immunity. They forgot that the revolutionary State was the King's heir, and consequently enjoyed this very same royal and universal superiority. It was not therefore the *alleu* which won the day in 1789; for the universal "direct dominion" of the State was maintained and confirmed. Indeed French tribunals, for more than half a century, expressly recognised the "direct dominion" of the modern State over all lands. But for the last forty years (since the *arrêt de cassation* of 1857) magistrates have been afraid of the term "*directe*"; they will have no more to do with *directe* even for the benefit of the State. But, nevertheless, French land, subject as it is to an annual land-tax, and on occasion to succession dues, has no right to the name *alleu*. Lawyers' illusions make no difference as to this fact.

This triumph of the universal superiority of the State demands a short explanation. The long struggle of the French Kings against the *alleu* was at bottom nothing else than the encroachment of the State, growing stronger and more powerful every day. In the thirteenth century, and still more in the fourteenth, the State began to reclaim the universal right of taxation which it had lost since about the ninth century. This historical right is represented during the Middle Ages by claims to collect a *cens* from estates which till then had been free from all dues; the King and the lords supported their claims by the famous axiom, "*Nulle terre sans seigneur*" (unless the contrary be proven). This axiom played an important part in the struggle of six centuries, which ended in the triumph of the universal suzerainty of the

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King. With these four words, "*Nulle terre sans seigneur*," dues were levied on very many allodial estates without title or ground. A little later the King, without yielding his claims to feudal dues, originated a modern system of taxation, which by degrees was extended to all estates. In consequence many proprietors fell victims to this double fiscal system — the feudal *cens* (connected by imperceptible links with the Roman system of taxation) and modern taxes. The *cens* in such cases was not a rent that had been reserved upon a grant of land; it was pre-eminently one of the results of that sort of feudalism which is imposed by superior force (*féodalité dominante*), as distinguished from that which arises from a contract (*féodalité contractante*). Such an aspect of affairs explains and in part justifies the popular hatred of "feudalism." Those charges which are neither the price of a grant nor the effect of a contract, belong as it seems to a category of rights, sometimes called in eleventh century charters *malae consuetudines*. They are in fact in their very origin a mere abuse.

But time gives a sort of legitimation to land dues, which at their beginning were unjust. In point of fact modern proprietors never had possessed any land whose value was not lowered by an amount proportionate to the existing charges. No one therefore is injured by a land due of ancient origin. That is why the enfranchisement system is justifiable, even for dues of unjust origin. Moreover it is almost always impossible to distinguish ancient charges originating in a contract, from ancient charges imposed by craft, by force, or by virtue of the famous principle, "*Nulle terre sans seigneur*." Thus, from whatever point of view we regard this question, we must always regret that the enfranchisement system was not universally and uniformly applied to all charges in existence in 1789, whatever their origin.

The Constituent Assembly blindly carried out its enfranchisement of land. Thinking to serve the most legitimate interests, it struck a blow at the interests and rights of the poor by authorising all proprietors to nullify rights of pasturage by the enclosure of the ground. Its phraseology is solemn enough: "the right of enclosing or throwing open an estate is an outcome of the right of ownership and cannot be denied to any proprietor" (Decree of September 28–October 6, 1791, Sect. IV, Art. 4). Such absolute principles fly in the face of history. The Assembly is here translating into pompous axioms the new and extreme tendencies of the Economists and of certain royal edicts, against which there is no lack of protest even in the reports of 1789. The Constituent Assembly was herein unconsciously dealing a blow at an ancient right of the people, older by some thousand years than that feudalism whose hated traces at this time were sought everywhere. It struck also the newly emancipated tenants, who thought that of course they would be entitled to grazing rights over land which in their opinion had belonged to them as well as to their lord. Such grazing rights and

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common of pasturage had a double origin, in primitive communism and in ancient grants.

The decree just quoted, of September 28–October 6, 1791, is deserving of special attention. It is a small code of rural laws, many of whose articles are still in force. The one I have just cited has indeed found its way into the Civil Code (Art. 646).

It was the Economists also, who proposed to the Constituent Assembly a law, which, far from enfranchising the land, was a constant menace to certain classes of real estate. The decree to which I allude (May 1, 1790) calls on proprietors of marsh-lands to drain them, and announces that the State reserves the right of alienating such property from those who refuse to undertake the task of drainage. "Society," said the reporter of this decree, "cannot admit of any property protected by law, without tacit obligation to cultivate the same." And with this economic movement was connected the decree of August 14, 1792, ordering the division of the lands of the communes, the effect of which was somewhat lessened by a decree of June 10, 1793. Both these laws tended to abolish communal property in favour of private persons. Their effects, though limited, were disastrous. The division of communal property, against which earlier in the eighteenth century so many had protested in the name of the poor, injured the very class whom the Convention believed it was serving. A reactionary movement very soon set in. The law of 21 Prairial of the Year IV (June 9, 1796) suspended the division of communal property, that of 2 Prairial of the Year V (May 21, 1797) forbade it. In this case again the small holders were sacrificed to principles and theories; for the common lands, where the cattle graze, were a great resource to them.

There are charges incumbent on certain estates which no one could regard as feudal. The legislators of the Revolution could not dream of enfranchising land from mortgage (*hypothèque*) — that right in real estate which a debtor hands over to his creditor. No one thought of suppressing mortgages; but the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies busied themselves with improving the regulations. During the last two centuries the government of the monarchy had repeatedly attempted to reform the conditions of mortgage; and the Convention, resuming the task, finally brought forward a code of mortgage laws (9 Messidor of the Year III, June 27, 1795), some of which were certainly a great innovation. They seemed to invite private owners to raise money on their land, following the example of the State, which was ruining its credit by issuing paper-money secured on the value of the national property. This was the famous system of *cédules hypothécaires*. The Convention very wisely drew back from a piece of work that was manifestly most inopportune; it suspended the execution of the law which had been passed. The Constituent Assembly had not been able to deal with mortgages except by a decree of secondary importance

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(September 20, 1789) ; and they were not systematically dealt with until the Directory passed the laws of 11 Brumaire of the Year VII (November 1, 1798) and 21 Ventôse of the same year (March 11, 1799). This law of 11 Brumaire required that a mortgage or hypothec should be specific and publicly registered ; the origin of these principles is customary, for the Roman mortgage was secret. Besides this it drew valuable ideas from the Prussian code of 1794. Subsequently those who drew up the Civil Code introduced modifications in the application of these principles, which brought on them very serious criticism.

If the Directory in its reform of mortgages profited by the experience of medieval lawyers and the administrators of the last centuries, the Constituent Assembly, on the day when it proclaimed the legality of loans on interest (October 3, 1789), which had so long been forbidden, merely confirmed a tendency which had been developing for centuries, and which quite recently had found able defenders among economists and lawyers, such as Turgot and Bentham. The very term "loan on interest" replacing the old word "usury" sums up the intellectual work by which lawyers and casuists had almost succeeded in prevailing over dogma. It is a strange thing that Roman Law should have thus penetrated moral theology, and by easy stages have brought the conciliatory idea of *interest* into the very heart of the theory of usury. "We do not lend on usury," money-lenders had said. "We merely exact *id quod interest*, that is to say the *lucrum cessans* and the *damnum emergens*." Now the famous *lucrum cessans* and *damnum emergens*, which helped theologians to solve the problem raised by the prohibition of usury, are simply ideas of Roman origin. After all, the Constituent Assembly did but authorise a practice which, despite legal prohibition, had become almost usual, and which theology, influenced by Roman Law, was half inclined to recognise.

Not content with enfranchising real estate, the Revolutionary Assemblies evolved certain rules and principles respecting literary and industrial property, which formed the starting-point for modern legislation. For many years everything tended to bring about attempts at legislation in this sphere. Examples seen abroad could not but hasten this development. England had, in fact, distanced France in matters relating to industrial and literary ownership. Denmark also had surpassed her so far as literary ownership was concerned. Finally, one of the articles of the Constitution of the United States (1787), which sketched, as it were, a programme on this subject for the American Republic, was calculated to arrest public attention on this side of the Atlantic. This article recognises among federal prerogatives the duty of "furthering the progress of the sciences and useful arts, by assuring to authors and inventors for limited spaces of time exclusive rights to their publications and discoveries." In this matter of literary ownership

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the first question which arose in the French assemblies was not that of the rights of authors in general. The point in question was the reciprocal rights of dramatic authors and actors. A petition signed by La Harpe, Beaumarchais, Sedaine, and other men of letters, besides several memorials from Beaumarchais, brought the matter before the Constituent Assembly and occasioned the decree of January 13–19, 1791, which determined the relations of dramatic authors and actors. The chief precedent on this subject was a regulation of 1697, modified in favour of the actors in 1757. The decree of 1791 ended this continually recurring struggle which had arisen in the eighteenth century between authors and actors, a struggle in which Beaumarchais played a very active part.

The rights of authors in general were regulated by a decree of July 19–24, 1793. Until then the rights of authors, and still more those of publishers, had been based, not on a general and uniform law, but on special and personal acts of royal authority called privileges. In the second half of the eighteenth century the practice of the Courts, though it was not always very consistent, showed a desire to safeguard the rights of authors, and even those of their families, by its interpretation of these privileges. The decree of July 19–24, 1793, is the reflexion and summary of several decisions of 1777; but it is less favourable to men of letters than some of these decisions, which expressly mention an author's rights in perpetuity. In the system introduced by the decree of 1793 the ownership expired ten years after the death of the author.

Inventions were encouraged in France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by a system of privileges, analogous to the privileges granted to publishers and authors. In the same way these were transformed into a legal system of temporary monopoly by means of *brevets d'invention* (decree of December 31, 1790–January 7, 1791). This decree seems to have two very distinct sources: one, a royal proclamation of December 24, 1762, is French; the other is English, a statute of 1623 which the Norman chamber of commerce in 1787, the deputies of commerce in 1788, and the inspectors general of commerce in 1799 had petitioned to have introduced into France.

The progress we have traced in the development of literary and industrial ownership is perfectly normal. It is by means of the constant repetition of a phenomenon (in this case the royal privileges) that custom is worked out and positive law built up.

Civil Law. Law of Persons

Having examined the laws regarding property, let us consider those concerning persons, their rights and their status.

Individualism and equality were the fundamental principles from

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which these French legislators drew their inspiration. By individualism is meant that spirit of hostility to associations which daily grew stronger under the old *régime* in proportion as royal absolutism developed, and resulted in 1790–4 in the complete suppression of all associations, fraternities, and corporate bodies. Trade gilds were abolished in 1791, though it would have sufficed to declare all crafts open; religious bodies were abolished in 1790 and 1792; academies and literary societies in 1793; financial associations in 1794. A principle twice laid down, in June, 1791, and August, 1792, brought about these destructive measures: "The abolition of every kind of corporation formed among citizens of the same State is a fundamental basis of the French constitution" (June 14–17, 1791); "an absolutely free State cannot allow any corporation within its bosom" (August 18, 1792). It would be more exact to say, "an absolutely despotic State cannot allow of any corporation within its bosom." Indeed the royal power had constantly striven to restrict the liberty of associations; it had even in 1776 issued an edict concerning them (very soon withdrawn) which is already tinged with the despotic ideas of Jacobinism. "The source of this evil," said Turgot like a true Jacobin, "is in the right granted to artisans of the same trade to assemble and meet as a body." This is the very idea which was to triumph twenty years later. Turgot would not reform; he preferred to destroy. The Jacobins belonged to the same school; they continued the old *régime*, and achieved with exaggeration the work that it had begun.

But during the eighteenth century there were two opposite tendencies strongly marked; one was official, so to say, and doctrinaire, and opposed associations; the other, less apparent, but more deeply rooted, led, on the other hand, to the formation of new groups, and to the preservation of existing bodies. These vital forces, in combination with the interests which were being menaced or sacrificed, broke like a storm on Turgot directly after the publication of the Edict of 1776, and roused the *Parlement* of Paris against him. These forces during the eighteenth century organised agricultural societies, financial companies, and finally, on the eve of the Revolution, life-insurance companies — a new thing in France, and even illegal. Thus some forces worked for creation and propagation, others for suppression and destruction; but here also the destructive element triumphed during the Revolution. Nevertheless, life very quickly regained its rights. Creative impulses returned. Associations were formed or renewed; the laws were relaxed. French legislation still bears the bleeding marks of this triumph of despotism over the spirit of liberty.

Such, in brief, is the history of the savage blows struck by the French Revolution at the right of association. It attempted to suppress without exception all those abstractions called "artificial persons," sacrificing them to the chief juristic person of them all, the greatest

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abstraction, the State—that monster of which Bonaparte was soon to be the brain. And before its incarnation in a soldier's genius, the State had already become for a brief space incarnate, strangely enough, in a voluntary society, in a club, in the dreaded society of Jacobins, which reigned over France at the very time when revolutionary legislation forbade all associations!

As to natural persons, "men who live and die" as they used to be called, the chief concern of the eighteenth century on their account was that they should enjoy equal rights. Public opinion markedly inclined to the abolition of the privileges of nobles and the suppression of such edicts as put heretics outside the pale of the law. "The best state of things for which anyone can hope," d'Argenson had said, "is that in which the essential function of the monarch is to preserve equality by preventing the formation of an aristocratic caste." "No one has any idea," he adds, "of the harm caused by an hereditary nobility.....There will be no peace till the last vestige of the division between nobles and *roturiers* has been wiped out." So much for the nobility. As to heretics, it is well known that directly after the death of Louis XIV the Regent thought of reviving the Edict of Nantes, which for nearly a hundred years had brought to France such tolerance and liberty as were in accordance with the customs of the time. A little later the Abbé Morellet, Ripert de Monclar, Voltaire, and Portalis, as faithful representatives of public opinion in this matter, pleaded for this very cause, the cause of liberty of conscience, which before their time Basnage, Saurin, and the Minister Claude had eloquently defended. Tolerance, moreover, was gaining ground in England, in Germany, and almost throughout Europe. At last, in 1787, Louis XVI made a decisive step in this direction.

In both questions, that of the privileges of nobles and that of the disabilities of heretics, the great example of the United States, where for more than a century so many new seeds had been germinating, was vividly present to all minds. The several bills or declarations of rights, the Declaration of Independence (1776), the Constitution of 1787, circulated in the hands of all and were to serve as models. The Constitutions of Virginia (1776), Maryland (1776), Massachusetts (1779–80), and the Constitution of the United States (1787), forbade, either implicitly or explicitly, all bestowal of titles of nobility. Liberty of conscience had also been proclaimed. These precedents gave great force to the mighty current moving in men's souls.

At the dawn of the Revolution this current found its highest expression in the famous Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens (August 26–November 3, 1789). The report read by Champion de Cicé, Archbishop of Bordeaux, to the Constituent Assembly on July 27, 1789, gives us valuable information as to the sources of that celebrated document. It runs as follows:—....."We have thought it

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advisable.....that the constitution should be preceded by a declaration of the rights of man and of citizens.....Our soil should by right be the first to which this grand idea, conceived in another hemisphere, should be transplanted. We co-operated in the events which gave North America her liberty, and now she shows us on what principles we ought to base the preservation of our own. Formerly we carried fetters into the New World; now it teaches us to protect ourselves from the misfortune of being obliged to wear them."

Two articles only from the Declaration of the Rights of Man shall be quoted—Art. 1: "Men are born free and with equal rights: free and equal they remain"; and Art. 10: "No one is to be interfered with on account of his opinions, even on the subject of religion, so long as their manifestation does not disturb public order as established by law." These pregnant sentences are directly inspired, the first by the Declaration of the Rights of Massachusetts (1779–80)—the Declaration of the Rights of Pennsylvania (1776), and the Bill of Rights of Virginia (1776) are both nearly akin to the French declaration, but in a less marked degree—the second by the Bill of Rights of New Hampshire (1784). They sufficed for the abolition of the rights and privileges of nobles and clergy, and for the abolition of serfdom, which the decrees of August 4 had not taken the trouble expressly to abolish; since they contented themselves with doing away for ever with all servile dues. But these new regulations, in their fullest interpretation, admitted heretics and Jews on a free footing into French society; and, taken together with the decrees of August 4, the first article of the Declaration abolished the last vestiges of serfdom.

But side by side with serfdom, the faint reflexion of slavery, slavery itself had been reinstituted in the colonies by Christian nations. Perhaps the signal for a reaction in America was given by the Quakers, who from 1751 onwards refused membership of their body to those who wished to retain slaves. Twenty-nine years later the State of Pennsylvania passed its first Act in favour of liberty. In England the illustrious Wilberforce inspired the efforts of the Committee (composed chiefly of Quakers) for the Suppression of the Slave Trade. A similar very active society was formed in France, the Society of Friends of the Negroes. Thus liberty was near at hand in 1789. Would French law continue to recognise slavery in the colonies, having declared that "all men are born free and with equal rights, and that free and equal they remain"? Such a question could not fail to be asked; but the answer was long in coming. On September 28, 1791, the Constituent Assembly proclaimed the principle that "every individual is free so soon as he comes into France." But this was no more than the restoration of a law that had been in force in France for three hundred years, and had only fallen into neglect for some fifty years in the eighteenth century. The fundamental decision was passed by the Convention. A decree of 16 Pluviôse to 21 Germinal of the Year II

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(February 4–April 11, 1794) abolished slavery in all French colonies, and conferred on the negroes the rights of French citizens. The time for this measure was ill-chosen, and the precautions needed for such a change had not been observed. Liberty lasted only a short time. Napoleon boldly restored slavery in 1802.

Though the Revolution did not abolish slavery till 1794, so early as 1790 it granted to foreigners equal successional rights with Frenchmen (decree of August 6–18, 1790); in other words it abolished the right of *aubaine* (the confiscation of the goods of an alien dying in France), which had for a long time been undermined by international treaties, and in most cases reduced to a very slight special due on succession.

Our attention must now be directed to the abolition of nobility and the admission of Jews and heretics into French society. The decrees of August 4 were more precise than the Declaration, and had expressly abolished the pecuniary privileges of the nobility, as far as subsidies were concerned (Art. 9). The King had forestalled this abolition on June 23 in the declaration of his intentions; it had, moreover, been much discussed, and the Crown had for a long while been working in this direction in different ways, chiefly by the creation of new taxes to be contributed by the whole nation.

The law of succession to noble estates and in noble families, which was distinguished by a certain privileged position accorded to an eldest son, remained in force for the nobility after August 4 and after the Declaration of the Rights of Man, forming a sort of inner fortress, which might have helped to keep together the fortunes, and therewith the influence, of the nobles. The Assembly very soon took this in hand, thus evincing their strong wish to bring about less inequality of fortune. On the eve of the Revolution Filangieri had written a few pages which were widely read, on the "best ways of bringing about a degree of equality in the distribution of money and wealth," and on the "obstacles which existing laws oppose to this scheme." He dwelt upon the social benefits resulting from a multiplicity of proprietors. French legislators were to be influenced by the same idea in their decrees on succession, whether testamentary or intestate; it had been brought into favour by eighteenth century philosophy.

The preference for males and for eldest sons which had prevailed among the nobles was done away with by the decree of March 15, 1790. A later decree (April 8, 1791), which was violently opposed by certain Norman deputies and several representatives of the country of written (Roman) law, extended this law of equality to the successions to *roturier* tenements; for in certain districts preferential rights had been given to the eldest sons even of *roturiers*.

While hostile to the territorial privileges of the nobility, the spirit of equality had further objects in view. After August 4, 1789, the French nobility might be said still to exist, but only as a dismantled nobility,

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without civil or political privileges. What exists only in words and ideas seems intangible. However, from March 15, 1790, the Assembly made war against even these remnants, and proclaimed "All honorary distinctions, all power and superiority, resulting from the feudal system, are abolished." On June 19 of the same year the attack was renewed and carried further than before; for all hereditary nobility, titles of rank, liveries, and armorial bearings were abolished. "Sheer insanity!" Such was Mirabeau's judgment on this session of June 19. "It is sheer insanity.....and Lafayette, whether through stupidity or perfidy, is wholly an accomplice."

The legislator is powerless against public opinion, but against wishes and interests he has arms. The nobles, reduced from their rank and deprived of the rights of succession by primogeniture *ab intestato*, could still, by testamentary disposition, struggle against the intentions of the legislators. This the latter foresaw. From 1789 onwards the liberty of testamentary disposition, so far as direct heirs are concerned, had been threatened in the Constituent Assembly. It found a powerful adversary in the great Mirabeau, who wrote a famous speech against this freedom of testation, which had its origin in Roman law, while in many French districts ancient custom remained strangely hostile to it. The speech was read to the Constituent Assembly on April 2, 1791, the day after the death of the great tribune. Mirabeau's idea is that absolute freedom of bequest is the source of all feudal abuses. He invokes the principles of natural law and the laws of Solon. It did not occur to him for an instant to cite French custom — he knew nothing of it! Mirabeau wished to limit the devisable part to a tenth of the testator's property. Robespierre also opposed testamentary freedom; "this freedom," said he, "is the source of too great an inequality in wealth, which in its turn is the source of political inequality."

Testamentary freedom was resolutely defended by Cazalès, Saint-Martin, and others. Here in the midst of the assemblies we can trace the two currents, which even in the eighteenth century divided public opinion on this matter, one for, the other against. The first laws limiting testamentary liberty were not passed until after the fall of the monarchy. Entail (*substitution*), much restricted in the last two centuries by royal ordinances, was forbidden by the laws of August 25 and October 25, 1792. Finally (March 7, 1793) the Convention abolished the right of disposing of property whether by testamentary disposition, or by gift *inter vivos*, or by settlement on the direct line of succession; all descendants were to have a right to an equal part of the property of their lineal predecessors. So the law no longer merely aimed at equality; henceforth this was prescribed despite the wishes of relatives. The law of 17 Nivôse of the Year II (January 6, 1794) completed this system; it confirmed those levelling measures, so hostile to the aristocracy, and gave them a retrospective effect. The same measure set up

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a new law for collateral inheritance. Customary French law in such cases took into account the origin of the title to the property by giving *paterna paternis*, *materna maternis*. Revolutionary law ignored this distinction and divided the inheritance into two equal parts — one for the relatives on the father's side, the other for those on the mother's. By this means the fortunes even of *roturiers* would be reduced by degrees to a certain equality; rich families would gradually be despoiled for the benefit of poor families. Such at least was the idea of the legislators.

These laws of succession, by their universal character, affected not only noble families but also those of *roturiers*, whose customs they modified to a very great extent. In this connexion we must also mention the abolition by statute in 1790 (July 19–23) of the *retrait lignager*: the right that an heir had in certain cases of buying back the property that his ancestors had alienated. The *retrait lignager* had been condemned by Merlin (report of July 17, 1790) as contrary to the liberty of commerce and to that wonderful Law of Nature which was invoked in season and out of season. But a reaction in favour, not of the aristocracy but of paternal authority, was soon made manifest; the abolition of the right of testation had, it was said, dealt a blow to the authority of the father of a family. This evil must be stopped. A fresh law of 4 Germinal of the Year VIII (March 25, 1800) allowed the head of a family to dispose of a considerable part of his property. The right of favouring one among his children was restored to the father in districts where the "*droit écrit*" obtained, and newly created in several districts subject to customary law; for under the old *régime* the custom of several districts had in *bourgeois* families kept alive the old law of absolute equality among direct heirs. So the Roman testament, for a short time forbidden throughout France, made a triumphal entry even into Provinces that till then had always resisted it. In vain the tribune Legonidec opposed this new project, and resolutely maintained that it was a mistake to set down national demoralisation and the weakening of paternal authority to the principles of equality established by the new laws of succession. However, the right of succession by primogeniture *ab intestato*, and entail, those two buttresses of the aristocracy, were never restored.

As to the clergy, their pecuniary privileges, which had suffered during the last two centuries, were annihilated in a couple of lines by Article 13 of the Declaration: "A general contribution is indispensable for the maintenance of police and to defray the expenses of administration; it must be apportioned equally among all citizens according to their means." Jurisdictional privileges were also abolished in their turn (decree of September 7–11, 1790) by the suppression of ecclesiastical tribunals or "officialities," whose powers had been for the last three centuries constantly weakened and diminished.

Though ecclesiastics enjoyed legal privileges, certain clerical classes

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in return laboured under most remarkable legal disabilities in the time of the old *régime*; we refer to the "civil death" of the religious. A religious, after taking the vows, was not allowed to make a will, nor to receive any inheritance or legacy. Indeed, if he had not already disposed of his property before his profession, the next of kin inherited as though he had actually died. This was called in old law the civil death of the religious. This strange disability had been established in the interest of families, in order to assure to them the preservation of their patrimony. The civil death of the professed religious was abolished during the Revolution, though not until late in its course. The decisions and facts which led to it were as follows. In February, 1790, the Constituent Assembly issued a decree to the following effect: — "The constitutional law of the kingdom will not in future recognise monastic vows taken by persons of either sex; consequently such Orders and Congregations as take such vows are now and for the future suppressed in France, nor can any similar Orders be established in the future." The Constituent Assembly, in adopting these active measures of suppression, disregarded the dictum of Bentham: "In Catholic countries, it is sufficient for the destruction of all that is injurious to liberty, in convents, etc., to refuse the sanction of the laws to monastic vows."

From the point of view of common-sense the unfrocked monks should at once have resumed all their civil and political rights. But down to 1793 French legislators could not boast logical consistency in this matter. Although they solemnly declared that they did not recognise monastic vows, they went on recognising some of the effects of those vows. A decree of February 20–March 26, 1790, declares that monks or nuns, who have left their convents, are debarred from inheriting in competition with other relatives. As in the Middle Ages, the object is still to protect the family; for, if the unfrocked monk has no other counter-claimant than the Treasury, he becomes capable of inheriting. No further rights of inheritance were granted to unfrocked monks and nuns until a decree of the Convention of October 9, 1793. When issuing that decree the Convention did not act from a disinterested respect for principles; it is to be feared that the object was to favour certain unfrocked monks who enjoyed powerful protection. This decree, made to suit a particular occasion, permanently affected French law on the point; when fraternities and Orders were revived, the old legal disabilities were not re-established in their entirety; but a reminiscence of these disabilities may be seen in a law of 1825 touching female religious communities.

In order to follow out the application of the principles laid down by the Declaration of the Rights of Man, we must now examine the position of heretics and Jews and enter into the question of the marriage laws. We cannot advance far without encountering the marked contradiction between principles and actions, which during the Revolutionary period so often confronts us. Men who proclaimed liberty of conscience in 1789,

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and a second time in 1791, and yet again in 1793, at the same time carried on remorseless persecution of Catholic priests, and this in open defiance of their own doctrines. They continued the despotic traditions of the old *régime* and even exaggerated them. The training they had received bore its fruits. But the principles which the sufferings of humanity during centuries had called forth and ripened, the principles which these men promulgated even while they trampled them under foot, have a very different worth from that of these legislators. It has been said of them that they were giants. We need not accept that estimate; but the thought which inspired them was great. Meanwhile these heralds of liberty delayed the very liberty which they proclaimed. It is not necessary to analyse the decrees and laws, which seek their justification in that formula, "the government will be revolutionary until time of peace," for these violent measures belong chiefly to political history; but it was necessary to glance at them in passing, since these revolutionary measures attacked liberty of conscience and individual liberty, the foundations of private law. These attacks had no lasting influence on French law; but the new ways of thought had some very important consequences which have left their mark on legislation and take a definite place in it from the time of the Revolution.

On December 24, 1789, the Constituent Assembly, developing the principle laid down by the Declaration of the Rights of Man, announced that in order to hold any civil or military office it was not necessary to be a Catholic. The decree had Protestants chiefly in view. Public opinion was not yet so ripe for the admission of Jews as for that of Protestants. Mirabeau, the Abbé Grégoire, and Clermont-Tonnerre were almost the only politicians of any consideration in France, who took any immediate interest in the question of Jews. The Declaration of the Rights of Man, the decree of December 24, 1789, and the Constitution of 1791, only by implication set Jews on the same footing as other Frenchmen. The logical consequences of the principles involved in these documents were indeed drawn by a statute (January 28, 1790) in favour of certain Jews of Spanish, Portuguese, and Avignonese extraction, who lived in the south of France, and had even under the old *régime* enjoyed a privileged position; but this concession was made in such a way that to a certain extent it indirectly militated against the other Israelites in the country, by keeping them outside the pale of ordinary law. Alsatian Jews, who were said to be usurers, were in especially bad odour. In Paris, on the other hand, public opinion favoured the Jews. It was in Paris that a very remarkable movement was headed by the advocate Godard; a sort of *referendum* was organised; out of 60 districts 53 voted for the Jews, one against them; as to the other six we are not informed. The Commune, basing its action on the opinion of these 53 districts, laid an address in favour of the Jews before the Assembly, which the Abbé Merlot, then president, himself presented (February 25, 1790).

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But the solution of the question was deferred. At last on September 27, 1791, a member of the Constituent Assembly asked for a definite decision and gained his point: the terms of the declaration were settled on the following day; a decree dated September 28 explicitly granted to the Jews all civic rights, and formally set them on an equality with other citizens. In 1806 Napoleon indirectly went back upon these enfranchising laws and lowered the legal status of the Jews of a large part of the north-east of France by depriving them for a time of the right to obtain execution against the goods of their debtors. This measure was only temporary. It was withdrawn in 1808, owing to a solemn declaration by the Sanhedrim (March 2, 1807) that Israelites living under the rule of Napoleon would renounce all precepts of the law of the Old Testament which might be contrary to the law of France; in this way they answered all juridical objections which had been brought against their emancipation. But though these solemn assurances procured the withdrawal of the *moratorium* proclaimed in 1806, and even averted an alarming storm which was about to fall on the Jews, they were far from attaining a complete success; for the very decree which put an end to the exceptional measures of 1806 enacted for a period of ten years several new departures from the usual course of law to the disadvantage of Jews. Complete civil and legal equality for Jews only dates from the end of this period (1818).

The process of the rehabilitation of Protestants was quicker, and suffered no reaction because men's minds were more ready for it. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the decree of December 24, 1789, did not satisfy the Assembly. It wished, if possible, to heal the wounds inflicted by a century of persecution; it therefore ordered the restitution of all property seized from fugitive Protestants since the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. It proclaimed all descendants of exiles for religion's sake to be French subjects (decree of December 15, 1790). Finally, the Constitution of 1791 further confirmed the principles laid down in 1789, the eligibility of all citizens for public employments and the liberty of worship. Those slight barriers which, even after the edict of 1787, separated Protestants and Catholics in France, were now broken down; and there was perfect equality among Frenchmen.

We now come to the very complex history of revolutionary legislation in matters concerning the constitution of the family. It is a strange mixture of laws, which may be called historic, because they are the product of the evolution of centuries, and of improvised decrees without link or root to bind them to the past. The former have a lasting character, the latter proved ephemeral.

Following the chronological order of events we will consider first paternal authority, then marriage. One of the most important laws that the Revolutionary Assemblies devoted to the subject of paternal

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authority brought a peaceful ending to an evolution which centuries had prepared, and which was already completed throughout half France. This was the decree of the Legislative Assembly, which for the whole of France freed sons from paternal authority as soon as they came of age. Up to the end of the old *régime* in districts where "written," that is to say Roman, law obtained, paternal authority was not completely relaxed until the actual death of the father; at least as regards property it continued during his lifetime. In districts ruled by custom, on the other hand, emancipation from paternal authority at the age of twenty-five had long been the rule.

By the terms of a decision of the *Parlement* of Paris in 1673 fathers of families possessed the right of paternal correction over those of their children who had not attained the age of twenty-five. Any man under that age could be put in prison by his father's orders. As soon as the son had reached the full age of twenty-five this paternal right no longer existed without qualification. There was however an extra-judicial means of causing the imprisonment of a son over twenty-five years old by obtaining a *lettre de cachet* from the King. When the great Mirabeau was imprisoned on the authority of a *lettre de cachet* at the request of his father in the Château d'If he was over twenty-five years of age. *Lettres de cachet* were done away with by the decree of March 16, 1790; but the general state of things formulated in the decision of the *Parlement* of Paris in 1673 still continued. It was abolished by the decree of August 16–24, 1790. By the terms of this decree the right of imprisoning a child ceases as soon as the young man reaches the age of twenty; the time of detention could not exceed a year. Further, the father was no longer allowed the right of condemning the son to imprisonment; this penalty could only be inflicted by a family tribunal consisting of father, mother, and grandfather or guardian. The family tribunal did not outlast Revolutionary legislation. It was at bottom nothing further than a family council, strengthened and armed with fresh powers.

But for the age-limit in case of imprisonment of minors, under the laws of 1790 majority was still fixed at twenty-five; and paternal authority over property as it existed in the South of France remained unchanged. It was not until the decree of August 28, 1792, that the attainment of a majority of twenty-five in itself constituted enfranchisement throughout France. Henceforth a man of twenty-five was free not only in respect of his person, but also in respect of property, alike in northern and southern France. A little later, the decrees of September 20, 1792, and January 31, 1793, fixed the legal majority at twenty-one instead of twenty-five years.

It is not surprising that this triumph of enfranchisement by majority was final. It had been gradually prepared. Indeed it is characteristic of most of the durable laws framed during the Revolutionary period that they were the outcome of centuries of exertion; and inversely it is

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characteristic of the ephemeral measures, that they had no root in the past and came without preparation, and were in a word improvised.

We will now consider legislation regarding marriage, in which historical elements are imperfectly combined with others, more recent and far less durable. All Frenchmen, whether Catholics, Protestants, Jews or freethinkers, were to enjoy the same civil rights. That was the recognised principle. But a grave question soon arose : in order to attain this end, would it be necessary to alter the marriage laws? This step did not at first strike the Constituent Assembly as inevitable. Since 1787 marriage had ceased to be legally impossible for non-Catholics ; thenceforth a civil marriage (for which the practice of the Courts had previously managed to provide a substitute) was open to them, so that the new principles of liberty and equality seemed to be satisfied. It cannot however be too clearly impressed on the reader, that, starting from the promulgation of the civil constitution for the clergy (July to August, 1790), this legislation worked to the disadvantage of orthodox Catholics. A heavy blow was struck at their religious liberty, for in order to be married they were obliged to have recourse to priests who had taken the oath, that is to say to schismatics. The edict of 1787 did not establish purely civil marriage for the benefit of Catholics, but only for that of non-Catholics. It was not until 1791 that the Constituent Assembly, combining the results of centuries of evolution in doctrine and practice into a principle, and, acting on the precedent afforded by the decrees of Joseph II in 1783 and of the Synod of Pistoia in 1786, implicitly laid down the principle of civil marriage for all Frenchmen. "In the eye of the law marriage is simply a civil contract" : these are the very words of the Constitution of 1791. Certainly the Assembly in passing this section of the law gave no thought to the interests of orthodox Catholics. Very possibly however it may have been turned to account by some of the faithful, helping them to solve the delicate problem by a double marriage — a legal marriage by civil contract and a religious marriage by sacrament in the presence of a priest who had not taken the oath.

By the decree of September 20–25, 1792, the Legislative Assembly finally established in France, or to speak more exactly extended to all Frenchmen, what we call civil marriage, that is to say marriage before the public officer of the municipality without the intervention of a priest. All transactions affecting civil status were at the same time secularised ; the written registers of births, marriages, and deaths were taken from the clergy and entrusted to municipal officials.

This extremely important law was in a very large measure the outcome of a movement, which for two centuries had influenced legal theory, the practice of the Courts, and legislation. On the one hand, legal doctrine had constantly sought to accentuate the contractual element in marriage ; starting from the principle, in favour among canonists and

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theologians, that the contract is the matter of the Sacrament, it claimed this contract for its own province as being a temporal affair, and thus became mistress of the situation. The lay Courts, by taking possession of the contract, which was regarded as the "matter" of the Sacrament, in effect took possession of the marriage. Moreover the Crown, which in part had originated the system of registration for births, marriages, and deaths, had never left off legislating on the subject; so that the parish priests, in their quality of custodians of the registers, really were dependent on the civil power.

The decree of September 20, 1792, contains the following interesting decision as to the minimum age for marriage. "The minimum age for marriage is the completion of the fifteenth year for men, and of the thirteenth for girls." This article brings civil law sensibly nearer to Canon Law, a fact which has not been sufficiently noticed. Canon Law, like Roman law, allows of marriage at fourteen and twelve years of age. The consent of father or mother was indispensable until the age of twenty-one; but any person who had attained that age might marry without asking the consent of his parents or guardians. The older law obliged the person of full age to approach his relatives with a formal and respectable petition for consent; and this formality was re-established by the Civil Code.

The decree of the Legislative Assembly which secularised marriage was followed on the same day by an equally important decree establishing divorce. One or two *cahiers* of the Third Estate, a few pamphlets, and occasional writings, demanded in 1789 the establishment of divorce; but public opinion and legal theory were not quite ready for it. Divorce in France was something of an innovation, though it is true that a man like Montesquieu could approve it. Divorce had its partisans, chief among whom was the sinister Duke of Orleans. But neither public opinion, nor legal theory, was prepared to accept it. The law of divorce was inscribed among the laws of the State, but even the Constitutional Church solemnly rejected it (1797); the Revolutionary Assemblies never ceased to tinker it; it was altered for the last time by the legislation of 1804, abolished in 1816, and did not reappear until 1884.

Not only was divorce established by law in 1792, but by the same law judicial separation was implicitly abolished, so that ill-assorted couples had no other resource than dissolution of marriage. No less drastic remedy was open to them. Moreover, the dignity and moral elevation of marriage seem to be called in question by the legislators. This appears especially in the statutes relating to natural children. The history of Revolutionary legislation as regards natural children is very remarkable. On March 25, 1792, a lady named Grandval petitioned the Assembly for a law permitting natural children to succeed to the mother's inheritance and to become capable of receiving universal or

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residuary bequests. There was much to be said for this petition. French legislation, in giving bastards the right to inherit from their mother, would simply have given general force to a rule which already applied in certain Provinces, and thus have satisfied the well-justified wishes of humanitarians.

It must be noted that this lady had in view only the inheritance of the mother, not that of the father, and that under the old *régime* natural children already inherited from the mother in certain districts of France, for instance at Valenciennes, Lille, St Omer, and throughout Dauphiné. The petitioner, or rather the well-informed man who drew up the petition for her, was not ignorant of provincial customs and quoted them with just praise, a very rare thing at this time. In conclusion, he felicitously applied a proverb known to the customary law, "No one is a bastard by the mother's side." The petitioner, an unmarried mother, was present, though she did not herself read her request. The president, with the silly pomposity so common at that time, turning to the lady, said: "Madam, the claims of Nature are to a free nation the first of all laws. The National Assembly will devote all its attention to the interesting petition you have just presented. The Assembly applauds and treasures the sentiment which dictated it, and invites you to the sitting." Applause followed the words, and the petition was confided to the Legislative Committee.

The Committee, which had already considered the question, hesitated, issued a scheme, withdrew it, and ended by adopting the principles of "pure reason," or the nearest approach to it. In other words they proposed to proclaim the rights of Nature. On June 4, 1793, the Convention laid down the principle that bastards should inherit both from father and mother; on August 9 this idea was stated more precisely: recognised natural children, unless born of adultery or incest, were to have the same rights as legitimate children. Thus the equality is almost absolute. The petition of 1792 is left far behind. It is interesting to observe the attitude of the chairman, Cambacérès, in this matter. On June 4 he demanded only a part of what was given to the legitimate child for the illegitimate. Two months later, on August 9, he had completely thrown aside these last prejudices. Not only did he, in common with all the Committee, claim for natural children not born of adultery an equal share with the legitimate, but he further explained that his own opinions were still more radical; to his mind all children without distinction, even those born of adultery, ought to have the right of inheriting from those who brought them into the world. We might infer that this future Arch-Chancellor and prince of the Empire was an advocate of the abolition of marriage, which in his system becomes an inexplicable superfluity.

This monstrous equality between legitimate and natural children, proclaimed by the Convention, had for some years, by virtue of the decree

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of November 2, 1793, a retrospective efficacy; until August, 1796, it benefited children born between July 14, 1789, and November 2, 1793, with some reservations in favour of legitimate children who had already received their shares. On the other hand, on November 2, 1793, the hesitating Convention deferred, until the publication of the Civil Code, a definite decision on the rights of natural children to inheritances accruing after that date. Between November 2, 1793, and the publication of the Civil Code (March 20, 1804) the successional rights of natural children remained uncertain. The tribunals were unable to decide upon the rights of children born out of wedlock whose father or mother died during this time. The provisions of the legislation of June–August, 1793, from which even the Convention itself flinched, were not retained by those who framed the Civil Code, but a few features of Revolutionary legislation were left standing. These legislative innovations, as a matter of fact, defeated their own ends. There was a wish to improve the lot of natural children; and it was supposed that this end would be attained if they were allowed a certain share in their father's property. But the concession of this share tended to deny any sort of right to natural children not recognised by their fathers, and to prohibit investigation into questions of paternity, which would expose families to terrible blackmailing. Thenceforward the natural children, whom their fathers would consent to recognise, were only a small minority. It followed then that those natural children who benefited by this new legislation were rare and privileged exceptions; the generality of bastards had a worse fate than before, because they had lost the right to institute an investigation of paternity for the purpose of enforcing against their fathers a certain right to alimony, which the old law had somewhat easily accorded to them. This is a striking example of the harm that legislators can do when they improvise laws.

The eighteenth century was moved by a natural desire for reaction against certain artificial institutions, laws, and customs. It carried reaction to excess, calling it a return to simplicity and nature. But, while the law of nature may be held to justify the legislation relating to bastardy, in the question of adoption Rome got the better of nature. The Legislative Assembly (January 18, 1792), and later the Convention, legalised the principle of adoption. The Convention set about making regulations for it. Strangely enough in this matter the Assembly very soon was ruled, less by a desire to imitate the Romans, than by a vain hope, that by introducing adoption it would lead to the further division of fortunes.

Cambacérès, that master of flattery, speaking of adoption in the Preliminary Report of the first scheme for the Civil Code, called it an "admirable institution; which you have had the honour of re-establishing. It is intimately bound up with the constitution of the Republic, for it leads without disturbance to the subdivision of large fortunes." But how

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does adoption lead to the division of fortunes? Here is the key to the enigma. The Convention, rejecting Azéma's project, which denied the right of adoption to all who had children, took up a different scheme, which gave fathers of families the power to adopt. If they made use of this right they would increase the number of shares, which would be a gain to society. The hope of seeing fathers diminish the fortune of their children by the introduction of strangers into the family is one of the strangest ideas of a time which was fertile in strange ideas! The legislators however foresaw that on the other hand rich men with no descendants might, by adopting a child, provide themselves with a sole heir, and thus avoid the parcelling out of their estate among the statutory heirs. To avoid this danger they reduced the claim of the adopted child on the estate of its adopter to an amount which would bring in the annual income of 300 quintals of wheat — another return to nature, for the terrible panic caused by paper-money prevented them counting by *livres* or *francs*. Thus, although the institution of adoption came in conflict with the cult of nature, which inspired the law on illegitimacy, at any rate the Convention in passing both laws remained true to a single political idea — to the dominating idea already familiar to the reader, which can be summed up in the words, "division of fortunes, tending to equality."

A chapter on adoption formed a part of the Convention's Civil Code, to be mentioned below. Adoption shared the fate of the whole of that Civil Code; it hung in suspense, unregulated. However, as the principle had been legalised by the Legislative Assembly, all adoptions taking place after January 18, 1792, were recognised as valid. It remained for those who drew up the Civil Code to legislate on the subject. It need only be observed here that what the Convention foolishly regarded as an excellent expedient for the division of fortunes has proved itself in our days an aid to the concentration of wealth.

Projects of a Civil Code

At the end of the Revolutionary period very little indeed remained of the old local customs. Everything connected with feudalism had been abolished. Intestate inheritance was entirely altered. The law relating to wills was remodelled. Mortgage too (which had fallen however rather within the sphere of royal edicts than within that of custom) was reorganised. Marriage does not come into account, for that was a religious institution, which was outside the scope of the old provincial codes. The disposition of property as between husband and wife, and wardship, were almost the only subjects of importance which escaped the hasty judgment of the legislators, although the Convention discussed the disposition of property between husband and wife without coming to any conclusion.

Hasty indeed was their judgment. In the space of a few years

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everything was to be remodelled at once: society, the Constitution, public law, and civil law. Prodigious activity was brought to the colossal task. An almost unbroken series of decrees and laws had gone to the building up of the universal Civil Code, now nearly complete, which the Constituent Assembly had promised to the nation. But, strange to say, this idea of a universal code still hovered over the heads of the legislators, and for the most part was kept quite distinct from the legislative decisions, which from day to day, little by little, were forming that Code. It was as if there were two inspirations, simultaneous and concurrent. Laws were constantly being promulgated, which in truth were fragments of the Code, and yet as a rule a distinction was made between the two kinds of work, which really had the same end in view; so that at last the Code, which was always being adjourned, was practically ready. It had been made without any definite intention of passing it.

We have just considered some of these disconnected chapters. They were once more retouched, altered, redrafted, and in some points seriously modified before, under Bonaparte, they became the Civil Code. But the idea of the Code was developed during the Revolutionary period; it was always present, though never completely realised. It has already been observed that the idea of codification, which had long existed in France, during the eighteenth century had become almost general in Europe. Sweden had started her code in 1736; Bavaria hers in 1751–6; Austria and Prussia had been working at their codes for many years. France, when in 1789 she began to unify her laws, entered one of those wide tracks, which almost all Europe was treading in the eighteenth century, moved by the same impulses.

The Constituent Assembly twice decreed that a code of civil law should be drawn up, clear, simple, suited to the Constitution and common to the whole kingdom. But what was this code to be? Cazalès, the deputy for Languedoc, proposed to impose Roman law on the whole of France. This violent solution, simple as it appeared, would only have served to complicate the problem; for ancient Roman law applied to modern society could only be a borrowed garment, which would constantly need altering, remodelling, unpicking, and remaking.

The Constituent Assembly promulgated a penal code and a code of criminal procedure to be noticed below. But it was left for the Convention seriously to attempt the labour of a Civil Code. Four projects for the Code had already been elaborated, before the fifth which was destined to succeed. We will recall these various efforts. On June 25, 1793, the Convention issued the remarkable order to the Legislative Committee to present a scheme for a Civil Code within the next month; and, which was still more remarkable, the order was carried out almost to time. The Legislative Committee presented a clear methodical scheme of 719 articles on August 9, 1793. The Convention, amid disorder at home and war abroad, peacefully deliberated on questions of

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inheritance, alluvial lands, illegitimate children, and the whole body of civil law, from August 22 to October 28, 1793. But though the project was passed it was not promulgated, as it was thought to be too complex. The Convention confined itself to the proclamation of separate portions.

On September 9, 1794 (23 Fructidor of the Year II), the committee presented a second scheme of 297 articles, a sort of summary, which only contained the principles involved and their immediate consequences. The Convention soon perceived that this was more the skeleton of a code than the Code itself. The discussion of it was suspended. A third scheme was presented, not to the Convention, but to the Council of Five Hundred by the so-called Commission for the Classification of Laws (June 14, 1796—24 Prairial of the Year IV). This scheme, which according to Portalis was a masterpiece of method and exactness, was scarcely examined and remained almost entirely a dead letter. Jacqueminot presented a fourth scheme to the Legislative Commission of the Council of Five Hundred (30 Frimaire of the Year VIII—December 21, 1799). This project was not discussed. Finally an order from the Consuls (24 Thermidor of the Year VIII—August 12, 1800) commissioned Tronchet, Maleville, Bigot, Préameneu, and Portalis, to draw up a fresh project for a Code. This fifth scheme developed into the Civil Code; an imperfect piece of work it certainly was, but wise, well weighed, and saturated with traditional elements.

Penal Law and Law of Procedure

During the second half of the eighteenth century the "voice of Nature" as they called it, the "voice of Humanity," made itself heard on every hand. One of the most trying scandals, that offended the "sensitive souls" of the period, was the state of criminal procedure and the penal system. Criminal procedure was inquisitorial and secret; the penal system was needlessly cruel. Even civil procedure caused serious complaint. As society grows old, procedure becomes disastrously cumbrous. It grows both complicated and costly, because on the one hand complexity of interests and of business demands more time, more special knowledge and more study, and in this way lawyers become more indispensable; while on the other hand, yielding to corrupt influences of personal interest, they delight to complicate and by artificial means to make more burdensome what in its own nature and by force of circumstances is complicated and burdensome already. In the eighteenth century this evil was very great. There was a general wish for simpler judicial mechanism. On the eve of the Revolution the King and his Ministers took on them to interpret the needs of the people. They demanded schemes of reform from the *Parlement*; then they reformed on their own authority until, wearied by the *Parlement's* opposition, they withdrew their measures. It was the Revolution that to a great

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extent completed this difficult task, organised a new criminal procedure, and altered the penal system. But with regard to civil procedure it proved, as we shall see, unsuccessful.

Ever since the sixteenth century some few had protested against the abuses of this inquisitorial and secret method of procedure combined with torture, which in France and almost throughout Europe had taken the place of the old system of accusation. Among these generous forerunners were Jean Constantin, Dumoulin, and Pierre Ayrault, who criticised the secret procedure (confirmed by the ordinance of 1539) in no measured terms. In the seventeenth century a German Jesuit, Friedrich von Spee, exposed the cruelty and folly of torture; and two Frenchmen, La Roche Flavin, President of the Chamber of Requests, and Augustin Nicolas, President of the Dijon Parlement, spoke with conviction in this sense. So did Lamoignon in the commission which drew up the great criminal ordinance of the reign of Louis XIV (1670).

But these were isolated protests. A century after the publication of Augustin Nicolas' work, a hundred and fifty years after Spee's little book had appeared, two hundred and fifty years after Jean Constantin, Dumoulin, and Pierre Ayrault, public opinion at last was roused. It was roused by Montesquieu, Beccaria, and Voltaire, Beccaria's able commentator. Secret procedure, torture, the fierce penal system bequeathed by the Middle Ages to the century of Madame de Pompadour, were thenceforward condemned; and some of this ancient lumber was thrown overboard even before the era of the Revolution.

For French publicists of the eighteenth century, the inquisitorial and secret criminal procedure was no longer summed up in the ordinance of 1539, but in that of 1670—a more careful and complete piece of work. It was this small royal code which was to be repealed and replaced. But how was this to be done? These active minds, that set out to reform the world, undertook a gigantic enquiry into both past and present; they investigated what had been and what actually existed in foreign countries. "In these investigations," says Esmein, "whereas the history of France ought chiefly to have occupied the attention of Frenchmen, the institutions of two foreign nations attracted most notice, those of the Romans and the English. Now during the best period of Roman history, and in contemporary England, there was a very different criminal procedure from that known in France; cases were tried in open Court, there was full liberty of defence, and judgment was given by a jury."

English procedure struck the French as a living model. "It is not the custom in England to examine witnesses secretly," writes Voltaire; "that would make them informers. Procedure is public; secret trials are the inventions of tyranny." "We have abolished torture," he makes his Englishman say in the *ABC*, "against which Nature appeals in vain in other countries. This hideous means of destroying the weak and

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innocent and letting the strong criminal escape was last used by the infamous Judge Jeffreys, who delighted in the infernal custom in the reign of James II." "In France," writes Voltaire, "the criminal code certainly seems planned to ruin citizens, in England, to be their safeguard." In this respect England stood alone in Europe. But even in England a certain admixture of inquisitorial and secret procedure was in use, as if to correct the faults of the native method. Moreover, despite the superiority of the English system, unfavourable evidence concerning the British Courts of law themselves was by no means lacking. Justice has always been more influenced by men than by laws.

As regards the penal system, the excessive harshness of punishments was just as terrible in England as it was in France, and was an offence to superior minds. "Experience has shown," says Montesquieu, "that in countries where slight punishments are in use the citizen's mind is as much affected by them as it would be elsewhere by greater ones." Beccaria also declares that all penalties not necessary for the maintenance of public safety are iniquitous. More and more attention was devoted to this point. In 1780 the Academy of Châlons-sur-Marne offered a prize for an essay "*on the best way of mitigating the harshness of French penal law without endangering public safety.*" The numerous competitors demand publicity of procedure, suppression of the oath of the accused, abolition of torture, full liberty of defence, and the system of *preuves morales*. Moreover, about this time several notorious miscarriages of justice gave certain generous agitators occasion to show up the faults of inquisitorial and secret justice. An officer of the *Parlement* of Bordeaux, Dupaty, published a memorial couched in strong terms, which made an immense sensation. Its suppression was ordered, just as that of Boncerf's famous memorial on the redemption of feudal rights had been decreed.

However, before the Revolutionary period, public opinion in France, as in most European States, gained successes in this sphere which promised a definite victory. Two royal proclamations announced the abolition of torture; the first (August 24, 1780) did away with *la question préparatoire*, that is, torture inflicted on a man accused of a crime punishable by death; the second (May 1, 1788) abolished *la question préalable*, that is, torture inflicted on a condemned criminal to extort from him the names of his accomplices. In this latter proclamation the King forbids the passing of sentence without statement of the offence, and assures public reparation to those accused and acquitted. He even holds out prospects of offering later some pecuniary indemnity, such as Voltaire had strongly recommended in his *Commentaire sur le livre des délits et des peines* (1766) and Mably also had proposed — a proposal in which Necker took a special interest. Although many *cahiers* of 1789 demand reparation for those accused and declared innocent, this subject does not recur in later laws. Finally, Louis XVI solemnly announced his intention

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of remodelling the whole of French criminal law, or in other words of revising the ordinance of 1670. For this purpose he opened a roving investigation, in which all Frenchmen might take part. "In order to set about this great work with the requisite method and discernment, we propose to illuminate the throne, on which divine Providence has placed us, with all possible information. All our subjects will be allowed to take part in the execution of the project with which we are occupied, by addressing observations and memoranda, which they think will throw light on the matter, to the Keeper of our Seals. Thus we shall raise the results of public opinion to the rank of laws, after they have been submitted to the test of a searching and matured examination, and we shall seek all means of mitigating the severity of punishments without compromising good order and public safety." The new spirit inspired these words of the King's and dictated the excellent decree of reform. There followed a series of very important measures, which were violently opposed by the *Parlements* of Paris, Metz, and Besançon, the *Cour des Aides*, and other bodies. On September 23, 1788, the King withdrew his declarations of May 1; and the project fell through.

It was the Revolution that transformed criminal law and utterly overthrew the ordinance of 1670. The *cahiers* urgently demanded reform; almost all insisted on the publicity of procedure, the right of the accused to obtain the help of counsel, the abolition of the oath exacted of the accused, and the establishment of trial by jury. Herein the authors of some of the *cahiers* had English usage in view; others, like Pierre Ayrault, based their reforms on old French custom. The demand was general for the abolition of *lettres de cachet*, which brought such confusion into the administration of justice. The petitions of these *cahiers* sketch out the chief lines which the reforms inaugurated by the Constituent Assembly were to take. The Assembly passed them in haste, retouched them with feverish precipitation, and bequeathed to another Assembly the business of remodelling them once more. In June, 1789, the King announced his intention of abolishing *lettres de cachet*. On March 16, 1790, the Constituent Assembly ordered the release of all those who were imprisoned extra-judicially. This was the end of an abuse or rather a survival, rooted in the ancient conception of a King as supreme and sovereign judge, which by the time of its tardy disappearance in the last years of the paternal Louis XVI had lost most of those hateful characteristics which had in some ages belonged to it.

We may now review in succession the reforms in criminal procedure. A decree of October 8–9, 1789, passed chiefly at the instigation of Lafayette, assured to the accused publicity of procedure and the help of counsel so soon as the preliminary examination was over. It also abolished torture once more; but it did not radically alter old methods of procedure. The deficiencies of this provisional decree—for as such the Constituent Assembly regarded it—were supplied by supplementary

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decrees of August 22–25 and October 12–19, 1790. Later it was replaced by the fundamental decree of September 16–29, 1791, which reorganised criminal procedure on an entirely new basis. This decree is in effect a code of criminal procedure, and to a great extent a simple copy of English legislation. It was accompanied by a penal code (September 25–October 6, 1791). The *jury d'accusation* and the *jury de jugement*, adopted despite the resistance of the elder Garat (session March 31, 1790), are the essential characteristics of the new system. Sieyès and Duport wished to introduce the English jury even in civil cases. Tronchet managed to prevent this. And so the old jury, which had passed from France to England during the Middle Ages, was introduced once more, after the States of North America had vied with each other in setting it down in their constitutions as an essential liberty. Procedure before the *jury d'accusation* was not public. It was not so in England, for even there the inquisitorial system had left its mark. Before the *jury de jugement* procedure was oral and public. The use of written documents was not, however, done away with. Notes were taken of the preliminary examination made by the *juge de paix*, and of the statements and answers made by the accused before the *jury d'accusation*. But it was very strange and quite contrary to the purpose in view, which was the protection of the accused, that these "*notes d'interrogatoire*" and "*éclaircissements par écrit*" were placed at the disposition of the public prosecutor, but not of the defence. The functions of the public prosecutor were greatly reduced; and private persons were allowed much greater and more effectual rights of accusation than formerly.

This new law left much to be desired. This was recognised, and less than three years afterwards the Convention commissioned Cambacérès and Merlin to prepare a complete project (3 Floréal, An II). Merlin single-handed revised the code of crimes and penalties, which the Convention passed without discussion on October 25, 1795 (3 Brumaire, An IV). It was a very well-arranged piece of work, which retained the chief features of the decree of 1791 improved and perfected. The results of the preliminary examination are to be reduced to writing and treated as they should be in equitable legislation. They are to be placed at the disposal of the accused as well as of the public prosecutor, on pain of all further procedure being null.

But although Revolutionary legislation gave the accused many advantages which he had not enjoyed under the old law, it took from him a most valuable one, which, in the absence of any statutes dealing with this matter, the experience and scruples of ancient lawyers and the considerations of theorists had built up: namely what is known in France as the *système des preuves légales* as opposed to a *système des preuves morales*. This system may be summed up as follows: Whatever may be the private conviction of the judge, he cannot condemn while

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certain proofs, of which the nature is defined, are lacking. These legislators made a direct attack on this rampart, which the science of criminal law had raised, and which, though somewhat artificial and pedantic, was often a most valuable protection to the accused, and a guarantee against the influence of passion. Instead of improving or simplifying the principles which endeavoured to define in advance the value to be assigned to various kinds of evidence, they utterly suppressed the old rules. "The personal conviction of the jurymen," says Article 372 of the *Code of Crimes and Penalties*, "is here in question, and it is this conviction which the law calls on them to pronounce." "The law does not call on them to explain the means by which that conviction was brought home to them; it prescribes no rule by which to decide on the fulness and sufficiency of proof." The same principle, expressed almost in the same terms, is to be found in the decree on criminal procedure of September 29–October 21, 1791. Henceforth the judge is not to be hampered by any formulated principles about evidence, and law proclaims her own liberty. There would no longer be any need for certain criminalists, unworthy the name, to come to her help with monstrous axioms, like that quoted by Filangieri, "*In atrocissimis leviores conjecturae sufficiunt et licet judici jura transgredi.*" We have travelled far from the ideas of Brissot de Warville, who in 1781, while sharply criticising the system of *preuves légales*, retained an essential part of it, the necessity for two witnesses; still further from the wise doctrine which Robespierre in vain formulated on January 4, 1791. "We must combine," said he, "the confidence rightly placed in legal proofs, with that due to the private conviction of the judge. Thus the accused will not be declared guilty without the existence of legal proofs; but he will not be condemned on legal proofs if they are contrary to the knowledge and private conviction of the judges." It cannot be denied that on this subject Robespierre spoke on the side of truth and justice. Turgot and Condorcet had made the same claim before. Robespierre and the Revolution reflect one another. In civil law the Revolution set up principles which it violated; in criminal law it promulgated laws, distinguished by considerable wisdom, such as these under consideration, and enacted exceptional laws, which far surpass any of the old *régime* in arbitrary and bloodthirsty injustice. And this contrast between theory and practice was never carried to such an extreme as in Maximilien Robespierre. He propounded to the Constituent Assembly a theory, which is the safeguard of those falsely accused; only a little later he sent crowds of innocent people to death.

France did not borrow from England this radical suppression of what Englishmen know as the law of evidence. On the contrary, rules admitting or excluding evidence played a great part in English trials at the end of the eighteenth century and do so to-day.

But this is not all. Under the sway of Revolutionary legislation in

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France the accused lost a chance of escape, which till that time all peoples, the most civilised as well as the most savage, had left him. The right of pardon, that will be necessary to human society so long as men are judged by men, French legislators, faithful followers of Beccaria, took from the executive power, despite the efforts of the Abbé Maury. They suppressed it by a vote of June 4, 1791, and a decree of September 25 to October 6, 1791 (Part I, tit. VII, art. 13). This monstrous decision was based on a theory and a sentiment. The theory was the distinction between the judicial and the executive powers. "We no longer have a Constitution, if the King has the right to pardon," said Dubois-Crancé to the Jacobin Club. The sentiment was an excessive confidence in the legislative reforms enacted — such reforms as in their view would henceforth render useless the ancient right of pardon. Beccaria had shared this illusion, so had Brissot de Warville. It is a striking example of the mistakes into which men may be led by a theory, however wise in itself, if pursued to its utmost consequences, and by blind belief in the efficacy of law. "When legislation is good," said Brissot de Warville in 1781, "free pardon is but a sin against the law." And of course the Revolutionists considered that their legislation was good.

Moreover the abuse of pardons, too often extorted as a mere favour without any avowable reason, was present to all minds. In this as in all other directions the radical spirit of the Revolution did away with the custom in order to suppress the abuse. Why did not French legislators, instead of slavishly copying Beccaria, consult Montesquieu, or use the American models so familiar to them, the constitutions of Virginia or North Carolina for example? A reaction followed in French public opinion; but this reaction was tardy and wavering. It is noticeable with what hesitation and timorous prudence Bentham opens the door to the indispensable right of pardon in his *Treatise on Civil and Penal Legislation* (1802), published in France by Étienne Dumont. Just at this time the right of pardon, lessened and suspiciously regarded, had returned to French legislation (*sénatus-consulte organique*, 16 Thermidor, Year X, August 4, 1801).

It is almost incredible that the responsible author, Beccaria, who had most to do with bringing about this disastrous movement of public opinion[1] against the right of pardon, himself heads his *Treatise on Crimes and Penalties* with these truthful words, which are his own condemnation: "Political philosophy cannot gain any lasting good for society unless it is founded on the indelible sentiments of the human heart."

The great reforms in procedure of which we have spoken, which overthrew custom and tradition, coincided with the hasty destruction of the whole social, administrative, and judicial structure, and could not at

[1] See also *Lois fondamentales et sacrées*: "*Lois pénales*," art. 10 (1755), in Morelly, *Code de la Nature* (a work ascribed to Diderot), p. 178 of Villegardelle's reprint.

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such a time yield good results. It might be worth while to investigate whether crime did not increase in France, during the Revolutionary period, in exact proportion to this "perfecting" of criminal legislation. The best laws — and it seems doubtful whether those under consideration deserve this epithet — the best laws owe their value almost as much to circumstances and surroundings as to their intrinsic merit. The inefficacy of the new legislation was plain to all minds at the beginning of the century. The law of 7 Pluviôse of the Year IX (January 27, 1801) showed a marked return to older methods. It enacted that witnesses should be examined in the absence of the accused, before he came before the *jury d'accusation*; before this jury written proofs were to take the place of verbal discussion, and the public prosecutor resumed a number of functions of which he had been deprived by former laws. It is plain that legislation was tending to a sort of compromise between the old system and the new. It was even possible that the new system would soon break down entirely. The jury system was much contested; in those terribly troubled times it could not escape the influences both of political prejudice and of fear. Turgot, in his correspondence with Condorcet, had from 1771 onwards raised objections to the system, which later could not but be repeated. A powerful reaction was within an ace of reviving the ordinance of 1670. After many discussions and struggles the jury system, which was to spread throughout Europe, was rescued. The result of these debates was the *Code of Criminal Investigation* of 1808; "at once a composite work and a compromise, it borrowed from Revolutionary law almost all the rules concerning pleading and judgment, and from the ordinance of 1670 almost all those concerning preliminary procedure." The *jury de jugement*, public oral procedure, and freedom of defence to the accused — these are the steps toward progress finally taken by the new legislation.

In the matter of punishment France had been inspired by Beccaria's humanitarian idea, which the Constituent Assembly had inserted in the Declaration of the Rights of Man: "the law must not ordain any penalties that are not evidently and strictly necessary." This principle dictated to the legislators of the eighteenth century, throughout almost the whole of Christendom, reforms which one might suppose to be the result of an agreement among the European States. The King of Naples, the Empress Maria Theresa, Louis XVI, Joseph II, and the Duke of Tuscany, forestalled or prepared the work of the Revolutionary Assemblies. In 1790 the Constituent Assembly solemnly proclaimed that penalties should be mitigated and proportioned to the offences (decree of August 16–24, 1790, tit. II, art. 21). In 1791, besides suppressing needless insults and horrible tortures, it was decreed that "the penalty of death is henceforth to consist simply in deprivation of life. Branding is abolished." And the Convention, as if to expiate its crimes, on October 26, 1795, closed its blood-stained career by the

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celebrated resolution : "The penalty of death will be abolished throughout the French Republic from the day of the proclamation of peace," an act of inward good intentions, which was not even inserted in the *bulletin des lois*. But we must not forget that this very penalty of death, condemned in theory by Beccaria, had already been abolished in Austria by Joseph II, in Tuscany by the Grand-Duke Leopold, and in practice suppressed by Elizabeth and Catharine II in Russia.

Ihering has said that the history of penalties is the history of their abolition ; it may better be said of their constant mitigation. Perhaps this idea is more particularly true as applied to Christian nations, in whose hearts a fruitful germ of pity has been implanted, and whose minds for more than twelve hundred years have been occupied with a concern which we are much mistaken in calling modern, the concern for the abolition of the penalty of death. But this mitigation of penalties is by no means regular or constant. At the moment when the Constituent Assembly and the Convention were discussing the problem of the penalty of death, several quite recent humanitarian decrees, quoted above, which might have served as examples to French legislators, had already been partly withdrawn or repealed. Humanity progresses, but by uneven steps ; it advances by action and reaction. We have seen Robespierre's just observations on the question of proof in criminal cases. We find this orator again at the bar of the Constituent Assembly on the day when the penalty of death was under discussion. With Duport, he proposed to abolish it. "Listen to the voice of justice and reason," said this humanitarian, too little known in such a character, "it proclaims that human judgments are never certain enough to justify society in taking the life of a man condemned by other men subject to error." This great philanthropist was deprived of the consolation of taking part in the voting of the Convention on October 26, 1795.

There is another penalty which Beccaria had criticised strongly — confiscation. It was abolished throughout France by the decree of January 21, 1790, but re-established after August 10 (decree of August 30–September 3, 1792 ; decree of October 22, 1793, 1 Brumaire, Year II ; law of May 3, 1795, 14 Floréal, Year III). The immoderate use, made during the period we are considering, both of the penalty of death and of confiscation, is notorious. Even the Convention, to its credit, was overcome by remorse on this point (May 3, 1795). But the honour of a final abolition is due to the Restoration. It was proclaimed by the charter of June 4–10, 1814 (art. 66), and confirmed by the charter of 1830 (art. 57), and by the Constitution of 1848 (art. 12).

We now come to civil procedure. This subject does not admit of great elaboration. It has already been pointed out that public opinion was greatly roused against the tardiness of procedure, the petty artifices of lawyers, the increased expense of litigation. Complaints of this kind

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may be traced from century to century, ever since the time when the restoration of Roman law and the definite establishment of Canon Law by their ever-increasing influence complicated the system of civil justice. Civil procedure, in throwing off its primitive barbarism, had lost its simplicity, rapidity, and cheapness. It became the secret of the lawyers, and on this secret they flourished. Since the fourteenth century this evil had been manifest to the clear-sighted; and the most various remedies had been tried. Pope Clement V and the energetic Gallican Pierre du Bois had in vain striven to correct these abuses. The old evils remained; legislators and politicians waged war against them without success. France, Prussia, and even Poland legislated against this pest of litigation. In Germany Leibniz, whose great intellect could not remain indifferent to any scientific problem or any human interest, brought the force of his great genius to this question of the simplification of justice. Toward the end of the old *régime* Louis XVI in vain urged the *Parlement* to take up this great work, and subsequently, in May, 1788, decided to promulgate two ordinances concerning the administration of justice, which ordered the abolition of certain irregular tribunals (the *Bureau de Finances* and the *Chambre du domaine et Trésor*). These ordinances, which were withdrawn in September, form a preface to the Revolutionary laws.

This subject had therefore been actually opened, and was even officially under discussion at the very beginning of the Revolutionary era. On June 23, 1789, in the declaration of his intentions, the King announced that he would "give his serious attention" to any projects presented to him, which related to the administration of justice and the means of perfecting civil and criminal law. On August 16, 1790, the Committee of Agriculture laid before the Constituent Assembly a motion containing the following naïve but significant article: "Country people are to be protected from sharp practice and usury." How they were to be protected the Committee did not take the trouble to explain; but on that same day the Assembly attempted to apply a whole collection of remedies, which have more to do with judicial organisation than with procedure strictly speaking, and which therefore for the most part lie outside our province. This was the decree of August 16–24, 1790. This decree gives considerable development and fresh force to the system of arbitration, and even offers to litigants in any civil case, of what nature soever, an arbitrator chosen by the State itself, the *juge de paix*. This magistrate, new to France under this name, existed in England and in several English colonies, notably in Virginia; Voltaire had made the discovery in Holland, and on his recommendation a great lord, the Duc de Rohan-Chabot, had already introduced the *juge de paix* into his Breton estates; yet the *juge de paix* was none other than the old *paiseur* or peacemaker of feudal times. But who would at that time have suspected this much vaunted official of being the offspring of that hateful and "barbarous" epoch? The decree of 1790 abolished the venality

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of judicial offices, proclaimed justice to be gratuitous, organised the election of judges, which Turgot had preached since 1771, suppressed all exceptional jurisdictions, while admitting that tribunals of commerce might be established (re-established would have been the more correct term) in any town on the request of the administration of the Department: in fact it organised new jurisdictions throughout France. But this decree did not directly modify civil procedure. In this respect it was content with a promise: "The code of civil procedure shall be immediately reformed in such a way as to make it simpler, more expeditious, and less costly" (tit. II, art. 20). None of the Revolutionary assemblies had the necessary leisure to complete so delicate and difficult a task. Even the Constituent Assembly passed the express resolution: "That until the National Assembly shall have made enactment as to the simplification of procedure, attorneys shall strictly follow the procedure established by the ordinance of 1667 and later regulations" (decree of March 6–27, 1791, art. 34). The same day a very simple but happily inspired measure was passed: "No *ci-devant* attorney, clerk, bailiff, lawyer, or proctor, can represent the principal parties at the *bureau de paix*; and other citizens will only be admitted as proxies, when they are fully empowered to compromise." In this short article distrust of lawyers is certainly plain enough; but two years later it went to greater lengths.

On October 24, 1793 (3 Brumaire, Year II), the Convention sketched a rough attempt at the simplification of procedure, which cannot be called a code. Its ruling idea is contained in Article 12: "The office of attorney-at-law (*avoué*) is abolished, but litigants may empower mere mandatories to represent them. Such representatives cannot claim any reward or salary for their services from the citizens whose confidence they have received." This radical measure bears witness to the degree of hostility felt against lawyers. It was hoped that by doing away with the officials who represented procedure, sharp practice also would be suppressed. The election of judges (decree of August 16–24, 1790, tit. II, art. 3), the suppression of notaries (September 29–October 3, 1791), the abolition of schools of law (September 15, 1793), all form part of this idea. Certainly the suppression of law schools coincided with that of all institutions for higher study and faculties of theology, medicine, and arts; but it survived far longer than most of the other suppressions, because it was rooted in a hatred at once of longer standing and more intense than the ordinary vandalism of that time. The spirit of the Jacobins was devoted to simple methods; it stayed neither to correct nor to cure, it cut and rooted out. The attorneys and the law schools shared the same fate with the King, the nobility, the Church, the magistracy. Abuses should not be tolerated, but we should nevertheless penetrate to the reasons of abuses. The varied and complex formalism of procedure is due to deep-rooted causes. And that is perhaps why the Revolution in the long run proved so utterly powerless when confronted

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by the question of procedure. It bequeathed to the Empire the ordinance of 1667 and the later regulations which it had received from the monarchy. The Empire in its turn, when it came to promulgate a Code of Procedure, made exhaustive use of these old sources. As to attorneys, they were re-established under the Consulate (27 Ventôse of the Year VIII, March 18, 1800, art. 93).

Taken as a whole, the legislative efforts of the Revolutionary epoch manifest a truth, which no historian of whatsoever school ever expressed more felicitously and clearly than Portalis in the preliminary discourse of the Civil Code: "The Codes of nations are the work of time; properly speaking they are not made." A good legislator rarely invents. He makes use of the rich funds of practice and existing theory, or again he intelligently imitates neighbouring States. It may chance that by this means he may find the past of his own nation in the present condition of another people. The ancient *paiseurs* and juries returned to France by way of Holland, England, and the United States.

And so the sound idea of the fellowship of humanity gains confirmation and precision. The prince, or the assembly engaged in legislation, has countless collaborators in the country and outside it, in the present or the past, obscure practitioners beside a crowd of authors and writers, some without name or glory, others more kindly treated by Fame. In a word, the good lawgiver has not indeed more wit than Voltaire; but more good sense, more knowledge and true legal spirit than Montesquieu; and this lawgiver is — all the world.

French legislation in the century just past wielded a great influence, because it was of this character. It was above all a collective and universal work in the wide sense which has been indicated. Taken in its entirety it is the result of historical forces, and no mere invention or artificial creation.

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CHAPTER XXV

EUROPE AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

THE French Revolution is the most important event in the life of modern Europe. Herder compared it to the Reformation and the rise of Christianity; and it deserves to be ranked with those two great moments in history, because like them it destroyed the landmarks of the world in which generations of men had passed their lives, because it was a movement towards a completer humanity, and because it too was a religion, with its doctrines, its apostles, and its martyrs. It brought on the stage of human affairs forces which have moulded the thoughts and actions of men ever since, and have taken a permanent place among the formative influences of civilisation. As Christianity taught man that he was a spiritual being, and the Reformation proclaimed that nothing need stand between the soul and God, so the Revolution asserted the equality of man, conceiving individuals as partakers of a common nature and declaring each one of them, regardless of birth, colour, or religion, to be possessed of certain inalienable rights.

This doctrine expressed itself in three main principles. The first was the sovereignty of the people: a conception differing widely from the old belief that the object of government was the good of the governed. The system of enlightened despotism, itself an immense advance on earlier theory and practice, broke down, because the work perished with the worker. What Joseph II aimed at, the French Revolution achieved. The second doctrine which France proclaimed was the principle of personal liberty. The intrinsic weakness of feudalism lay in its obstructing the free play of natural gifts. Feudalism as a system of relations between the King and the nobility had nearly disappeared from Europe; but as a system governing the relations between the nobility and the peasantry it still lingered on. It received a mortal blow from the Revolution; for the recognition of individual liberty involved the disappearance of serfdom and the abolition of social privileges. Feudalism maintained and intensified the irregularities of nature, while the object and effect of the Revolution was to diminish them. The potency of the Revolution is shown in nothing more clearly

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than in the fact that in the reaction which followed the great war no attempt was made to return to the old restrictions on personal liberty. The third doctrine, that of nationality, was foreign to the cosmopolitan teaching on which the leaders were nourished, nor did it appear till Europe began to interfere; but it arose naturally from the idea of the sovereignty of the people. The exaggerated centralisation of the eighteenth century had led men to think of States as districts subject to a certain authority, rather than as nations bound together by ties of blood, religion, language, or common traditions and aspirations. The French Revolution astonished Europe by the spectacle of a nation thinking and acting independently of its government. The conception of nationality was condemned at Vienna; but the idea had taken root, and the arrangements of the Congress in which the principle was violated were precisely those which were most speedily upset.

The Wilkes controversy and the American War had led to a remarkable revival of political activity in England. The decade preceding 1789 witnessed the birth of a vigorous movement for parliamentary reform; the platform began to assume the place which it has ever since occupied; and political societies were formed for propaganda. Ideas that are best described as radical were thrown into circulation by the writings of Priestley and Price, Major Cartwright and Jebb, Granville Sharp and Sir William Jones, Wynne and Burgh, and by the speeches of Horne Tooke and Sawbridge. The leading thinkers of France and England paid visits to one another, and, under Shelburne's roof at Bowood, Priestley, Bentham, and Romilly met Dumont, Morellet, and Mirabeau. Rousseau's educational theories had found disciples in Day and Edgeworth, and republicanism was represented by Mrs Macaulay, the historian, and Hollis.

The French Revolution came as a surprise to England, and the first voices were of congratulation. Fox's exclamation, that the fall of the Bastille was much the greatest and best event that had ever happened, expressed, if in somewhat exuberant terms, the disinterested satisfaction with which the great majority of Englishmen witnessed the downfall of a despotic government. Those who cared nothing for the emancipation of the French people congratulated England on the paralysis to which the Revolution had reduced her formidable rival. To many it was the beginning of a new era of peace, progress, and enlightenment, the realisation of those generous visions of perfectibility which floated before so many of the noblest minds in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

> "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven!"

The publication of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in the autumn of 1790 gave a rude shock to public opinion. He had been

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untouched by the emotions which in a greater or less degree affected almost all his contemporaries on receiving the news of the uprising of France; and the march to Versailles convinced him that nothing but evil would come of the Revolution. When Dr Price a few weeks later congratulated France on carrying further the principles of 1688, Burke took up his pen to establish the difference between French and English methods. After infinite elaboration the treatise appeared in November, 1790. It was addressed to two themes, the Revolution in France, and the right method of effecting political change.

The discussion of the Revolution was vitiated by Burke's failure to grasp its chief determinant causes. He declared France to have the elements of a constitution very nearly as good as could be wished, and he was imperfectly aware of the economic condition of the people. Arthur Young's *Travels* were not yet published; and Burke had forgotten the weighty maxim of Sully, which he had once quoted with approval, that the people never rebel from passion of attack, but from impatience of suffering. He knew that the finances were disorganised; but he failed to understand that even financial reform involved fundamental readjustments of the social and political order. He charged the Assembly with a passion for innovation, not knowing that the greater part of its work was in accordance with the desires of the majority of French citizens as recorded in the *cahiers*. In a word, he did not realise that the *ancien régime* was rotten to the core, that feudalism was doomed, and that a revolution from below could only have been avoided by a revolution from above. Nor did he recognise that the Assembly was composed in large measure of men, necessarily indeed without experience, but honourable and disinterested, and who, when he laid down his pen, had already lifted an immense burden from the shoulders of the French people. On the other hand, he displayed true foresight in declaring that the Revolution would fail to bring about a condition of political stability and that power would tend to pass to the most violent.

The permanently valuable part of the *Reflections* is that in which Burke passes to the general question of the method and justification of political change — a theme involving the discussion of the still wider problem of the nature of human society. His thesis, which was developed at greater length a few months later in the *Appeal to the Old Whigs*, is that the events of 1688 exemplified the principles by which alone revolutions were to be justified. Since the thoughts and instincts of ninety-nine in every hundred persons are those of the environment in which they are born, reforms must come in the shape of a gradual modification. In current opinion society consisted of an association of individuals bound together by a contract for certain definite purposes. To this view Burke opposed the conception of a living organism whose character is determined by its history, and whose members are bound to one another and to the whole by innumerable unseen influences. In this recognition of

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the unconscious and historical element in human association lies Burke's supreme claim to greatness as a political thinker. Though a weighty protest against the mechanical view of society had been uttered by Montesquieu, it was Burke's *Reflections* which overthrew the supremacy of Locke, and formed the starting-point of a number of schools of thought, agreeing in the rejection of the individualistic rationalism which had dominated the eighteenth century. The work is not only the greatest exposition of the philosophic basis of conservatism ever written, but a declaration of the principles of evolution, continuity, and solidarity, which must hold their place in all sound political thinking. Against the omnipotence of the individual, he sets the collective reason; against the claims of the present, he sets the accumulated experience of the past; for natural rights he offers social rights; for liberty he substitutes law. Society is a partnership between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are yet to be born.

In his victorious protest against the prevalent individualism Burke fell into the opposite error. For him, the present ceases to be merely the heir of the past and becomes its slave. States are denied the power of free self-determination inherent in every living society. The fatal weakness of Burke's method is that prescription appeals only to a certain class of mind, and that it can never be a substitute for common-sense, utility, or abstract reason. Moreover, despite his passionate denunciation of metaphysical politics, Burke's own philosophy is suffused with mysticism. His profoundly religious temper led him to regard the moral relations and duties of man and the order of society as of divine institution. Religion was for him not a buttress of the social fabric, but its foundation. He believed that there was an element of mystery in the cohesion of men in society, an unseen force that gave vitality to the organisation; and this conviction led to his unreasonable fear that the vital spark might at any moment be extinguished. Human association requires no other explanation than the common nature and the common needs of men; and in introducing a mystical sanction he seriously weakened the force of his appeal.

Burke's work immediately became the absorbing topic of conversation. The King said it was a book which every gentleman should read. Mackintosh named it the manifesto of the counter-revolution, and as such it was hailed with enthusiasm by the governing classes throughout Europe. It had hitherto been possible to witness the exciting scenes of the Revolution with sympathy or dislike and yet to feel that they had no direct bearing on the future of England. Burke asked his readers to believe that the occurrences concerned them scarcely less than France, and that the moral, social, and political foundations on which the fabric of civilisation rested were threatened by them. Windham foretold that the book would turn the stream of opinion throughout Europe; but though it made conservatives more conservative, it made radicals more

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radical. Its sweeping condemnation of popular principles called an army of democratic champions into the field. Burke's old friend, Sir Philip Francis, wrote him a letter of pungent criticism; Fox declared the book to be mere madness; and every aspect of his argument was subjected to sharp attack by Priestley, Mary Wolstonecraft, Mrs Macaulay, Capel Lofft, Sir Brooke Boothby, Christie, and many other writers.

Of the answers to Burke the most powerful and the most philosophically interesting was that of Mackintosh (1791). Indeed the *Vindiciae Gallicae* is on the whole the ablest contemporary defence of the essential work of the Revolution. Mackintosh lays his finger on the cause of Burke's capital error when he asserts that the Revolution was the revolt of a nation. The events of 1789 differed from those of 1688, because in one case it was sufficient to substitute William for James, whereas in the other it was necessary to eradicate abuses that were bound up with the whole framework of national organisation. Passing to the particular acts of the Assembly, he devotes special attention to the measure which aroused Burke's particular animosity. He has not the slightest doubt of the legal and moral right of a nation to convert Church property to national uses; and in the present instance the additional advantage was secured of the downfall of a great corporation which had shown itself the implacable enemy of political and intellectual freedom. The excesses had been relatively few; and, had they been as deplorable as the fabrications of the *émigrés* asserted, they would not have outweighed the inestimable benefits that had accrued. On one point, says Mackintosh, the friends and enemies of the Revolution are at one. Both are convinced that its influence will not be confined to France. In a remarkable forecast he declares that if an anti-revolutionary alliance were to be formed it would have no other effect than to animate patriotism and banish division, while failure would set in motion forces that would subvert the old governments of Europe. The probability of a decisive advance outweighed the possible dangers of failure. "Where would be the atrocious guilt of a grand experiment to ascertain the portion of freedom and happiness that can be created by political institutions?" In that question is summed up the temperamental difference between Burke and his critic. The strength of Mackintosh's book lies in its recognition of the fact that the Revolution was the work of the nation, and that many of the achievements of the Assembly were in the highest degree beneficial; its weakness is in its failure to perceive that the monarchy was not likely to survive the sudden destruction of the privileged orders, and that in the struggle for sovereignty the work of reform would be terminated.

The *Vindiciae Gallicae* had attacked Burke without going outside principles with which Englishmen were familiar. *The Rights of Man* (1791), on the other hand, compelled attention not less by the novelty of its ideas than by its consummate pamphleteering skill. Mackintosh had spoken for the educated middle class. Paine would speak on behalf

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of those whom Burke called the swinish multitude. His narrative is among the most valuable sources of our information as to the earlier effects of the Revolution. Burke, he said, had made the mistake of leaving the people out of his calculation. He had pitied the plumage and forgotten the dying bird. The leaders, like their predecessors in 1688 and 1776, had proceeded on the assumption that no generation could bind its successor. This assumption was the basis of all sound political thinking. The people were entitled to establish any government they thought fit, so long as there was no hereditary element in it, and to alter the existing government at their will and pleasure. Whatever contract may have been made, they could never surrender the natural rights which they possessed. The practical difficulties of Paine's teaching are obvious. He is not aware of the danger that the will of a portion of the people might be mistaken for the will of the whole, nor that his principles apply only to societies which have reached a certain stage of political education. To Paine, with his mind full of the United States, a nation was merely an aggregate of men, all keenly interested in politics. The difference between the systems of Burke and Paine is precisely this difference in their view of the average man. To Burke a nation was a community graded into classes, the members of which differ as much in their intellectual endowments as in the extent of their property — the greater number consisting of men untrained by study or experience to form a correct opinion on great constitutional questions, and regarding existing institutions, not as they conform to certain abstract tests, but as possessing a prescriptive claim on their respect and obedience. Paine was utterly blind to the part which prescription plays in the opinions and conduct of men. He combined the characteristic hopefulness of the eighteenth century with an extravagant contempt for the past. No two writers could differ more fundamentally; and they are at an almost equal distance from the thought of our own day.

The effect of *The Rights of Man* in frightening the governing classes was even greater than that produced by the *Reflections*. The unflinching appeal to natural rights, the outspoken contempt for the English Constitution, the audacious attacks on the King, and the confident assumption that monarchy and aristocracy would speedily disappear from Europe, seemed a confirmation of their worst fears. The alarm increased, when it was known that the book was selling by tens of thousands. At first Burke had stood alone among the Whigs; and, though several of his colleagues came to adopt his opinions, they desired to avoid a rupture with Fox. But the events of 1792 made compromise impossible. In the papers of Lord Malmesbury and Sir Gilbert Elliot may be traced almost from day to day the conflict in Whig minds between fear of the Revolution and loyalty to their leader. Finally Portland yielded to pressure and joined Pitt, taking with him Fitzwilliam, Windham, and the majority of the great Whig families. With Fox remained Grey,

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Sheridan, Erskine, Francis, Shelburne, Stanhope, Lauderdale, and Bedford. After a few years Fox and some of his friends ceased to attend the debates in Parliament. The course of internal English politics during this period is reserved, however, for treatment in a later volume.

While the Whig party was thus reduced to impotence, a revival took place in the reform movement in the country. Thomas Hardy, a shoemaker, formed an organisation among artisans similar to the political societies which had sprung up among the middle classes. The aims of the "Corresponding Society," as the new body was called, were those of Major Cartwright and the radicals; but the entrance-fee was only one shilling and the subscription a penny a week. Branches were formed in different parts of London, each sending a representative to a central weekly committee. The issue of a Royal Proclamation against seditious writings in May failed to arrest its advance. The society entered into correspondence with similar associations in the provinces, and its hands were strengthened by the foundation of the "Friends of the People," by Grey and Erskine. In November, 1792, the Corresponding Society made its first false step by an address to the National Convention, the excitable tone of which differed greatly from its previous manifestoes. Several other associations sent addresses, that of the Constitutional Society being presented with an expression of hope that before long a similar address might be sent to a National Convention in England.

The eulogies lavished on the revolutionists within a few weeks of the fall of the monarchy added to the general apprehension, and led to an attempt to adapt political association to conservative uses. John Reeves, the learned historian of English law, returned to England from Newfoundland in October, and immediately founded an "Association for preserving Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers," which flooded the country with pamphlets, warning Englishmen against French ideas and denouncing reformers as incendiaries. Indeed, in his anxiety to heap odium on every democratic principle, Reeves attacked the theory of English government that had been universal since 1688, and was censured by Parliament. The success of the Association in arresting the attention of the country was prodigious. If the first blow against French ideas had been struck by Burke, the second was struck by Reeves. Parliament was unexpectedly called together in December; and the Speech from the Throne declared that a design existed to subvert the Constitution. The prosecution of *The Rights of Man* began on December 18; and Erskine stepped forward to defend the author, who was absent in Paris. The verdict was a foregone conclusion, and other prosecutions followed. The decree of the Convention (November 19) offering to aid any people in a struggle with its rulers, though explained away by the French envoys, had caused the greatest alarm. The spy and the informer were abroad; correspondence was violated; and mobs rioted in the name of law and order. A Convention held in

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Edinburgh in 1793, and attended by delegates from the English societies, was broken up, and crushing sentences were imposed on the leading members. A few weeks later Pitt determined to attack the London reformers, who had meanwhile begun to hold large though orderly open-air meetings.

The trial of Hardy, Horne Tooke, Thelwall, Holcroft, and their comrades, for High Treason (1794) represents the culminating moment in the conflict between Toryism and Radicalism in England. The contending parties were worthily represented by Sir John Scott, afterwards Lord Eldon, and Erskine. One piece of evidence appeared damaging till it was explained. It was found that certain people had arms in their possession. The answer of the reformers was that, since the police had rendered no assistance in the riots in Birmingham, Manchester, and elsewhere, they were compelled to provide for their own defence. There was nothing in their conduct, speeches, or writings, which could be construed as a recommendation to violence. After eight days of intense excitement the jury declared Hardy not guilty. The acquittal of Horne Tooke, the most conservative of reformers and an opponent of universal suffrage, followed; and the lesser men were released without trial.

The evidence collected by the prosecution confirms the impression derived from a study of the writings and character of the reformers that Pitt and his colleagues misjudged the problem before them. They had convinced themselves that the associations consisted of men who hated monarchy, despised religion, and were prepared to repeat the horrors of the French Revolution on English soil. As a matter of fact they represented a movement for radical Parliamentary reform which had begun some years before the Revolution. Pitt and Richmond had withdrawn, but its general character had remained unchanged. A practical blunder was committed in demanding such a sweeping change as universal suffrage in a period of excitement; but the demand was not a new one. Though there was a certain amount of loose talk over liquor in the taverns, genuine republicans were rare. And, further, the movement was throughout purely political. With the exception of Godwin and Spence, who stood aloof from the agitation, the reformers were no more enemies of property, of religion, or of the family, than Pitt himself. On the other hand, the panic of the governing class is intelligible. They were scared by the appearance of large and well-organised societies demanding annual parliaments and universal suffrage. In the second place, they were alarmed by the rapidity with which reform in France had been followed by bloodshed and anarchy, forgetting in their terror that the factors which produced the conflagration in France were absent in England. But above all the reformers made a fatal mistake in the company which they kept. Though utterly opposed to the use of force, their indiscriminate eulogies of the revolutionists, while England was

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shuddering at the September massacres, gave colour to the charge that they too were friends to bloodshed and revolution. Scarcely less damaging was their association with Paine and with the English colony in Paris, certain members of which had by this time completely identified themselves with the fortunes and ambitions of France.

The failure of the prosecutions was a great blow to the government. The Constitutional Society broke up; but the Corresponding Society increased its numbers, and continued its great open-air demonstrations. The enthusiasm for the French war, which had never been great, altogether disappeared. The fall of Robespierre, the failure of the English arms, the final destruction of Poland, the withdrawal of some of the Powers at the Treaty of Basel, and above all the rapid rise of prices, produced a profound change. Early in 1795 Wilberforce voted against the war, and later in the year Auckland demanded peace in a widely-read pamphlet. On his way to open Parliament in the autumn the King's coach was mobbed, and cries of "peace" and "bread" resounded in the streets. Pitt responded with the Treason and Sedition Bills; but popular feeling continued to rise. A pamphlet by Erskine, who had opposed the war from the beginning, went through 33 editions in the year. In vain Burke vented his indignation in successive *Letters on a Regicide Peace*. Finally, Pitt yielded to the demand by sending Lord Malmesbury to Paris. But the peremptory rejection of the English terms by the Directors led to a revival of anti-Gallican feeling, which was strengthened by the attack on Ireland, the invasion of Switzerland in 1798, and the seizure of power by Bonaparte in 1799. Arthur Young, Mackintosh, the Lake Poets, and many others who had welcomed the Revolution, had long since recanted. The Corresponding Society was dissolved. Burke had estimated the incorrigible Jacobins at 80,000, or one-fifth of educated Englishmen; but the rise of Napoleon and the aggressions of France changed the character of the struggle. Almost without exception the men who had given a general support to the Revolution, and had opposed the war with the Republic, rallied to the government. The Revolutionary era was at an end, and the Napoleonic era had begun.

The effects of the Revolution in England had been to inspire the majority with an unreasoning dread of change. But for this feeling, Parliament might have been reformed, Nonconformists freed from their disabilities, and the Slave Trade abolished before the end of the century. In one direction alone was there an advance. In the universal panic even the Roman Church came to appear as a bulwark against anarchy; and the reception in England of the exiled French priests marks a welcome advance in the practice of religious toleration.

As defenders of the Christian faith, and as members of the upper and upper-middle classes, the Bishops and clergy of the Established Church ranged themselves from the beginning among the antagonists of the

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Revolution. The most active of its opponents was Porteus, Bishop of London, the spokesman of the Evangelical section, to whom the French Revolution appeared less a political than a moral revolt, to be best combated by religious influences. With this end in view he delivered popular lectures on Christian evidences, and made himself responsible for the distribution of the anti-revolutionary tracts of Hannah More, the only writer on the conservative side who reached the ear of the common people. A far greater man, Bishop Horsley, attacked the Revolution with scarcely less energy. The story is well known how the peroration of his sermon in Westminster Abbey, a few days after the death of Louis XVI, moved the congregation by an uncontrollable impulse to rise to their feet. He was the author of the celebrated declaration that all that the people had to do with the laws was to obey them. His Charges breathe fire and slaughter against Jacobins, French, and English; and, he even persuaded himself to believe that a Jacobin propaganda was being carried on in Methodist Sunday-schools.

The Church was not, however, without men who viewed the Revolution in a different light. Bishop Watson warmly greeted the occurrences in France, and declared that the majority of every nation had at all times a right to change its government. When war was declared he supported motions for peace on the ground that the French Republic was not, and never had been, a danger to England. Dr Parr, the greatest scholar and the most striking personality among the clergy, must also be counted among definitely liberal influences. His admiration for the character and policy of Fox was unbounded, and he numbered among his friends all the reformers of the time. Almost equally distant from the general attitude of Churchmen were the opinions of Paley. In his *Moral and Political Philosophy* he frankly authorises resistance in the case of the sovereign's ill-behaviour or imbecility; while his short tract, published in 1792, entitled *Reasons for Contentment addressed to the Labouring Part of the British Public*, merely argues how little political change can increase individual happiness. Well might Dean Milner declare Paley to be as loose in his politics as in his theology. Among lay spokesmen of the Church Wilberforce was by far the most eminent. He was fully alive to the need of reform both in France and England, and he realised the value of many of the ideas embodied in the Revolution, though he was shocked by the irreligion of the leaders. Some years later, in a remarkable study of Pitt, he declared that his friend might have inspired the country with such confidence in the constitution that an attack on the Revolution would have been regarded as unnecessary, and the war, the cause of all subsequent troubles, might have been avoided.

The Universities in the eighteenth century were annexes of the Established Church. With the accession of George III Oxford had exchanged Jacobitism for Toryism, and on the outbreak of the Revolution feeling ran high. Tom Paine was burned in effigy, Nonconformist

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ministers were assaulted, and a "Loyal Association" was formed. The minority appears to have consisted of two hot-headed undergraduates, named Southey and Landor. In Cambridge feeling was at first less unanimous. A branch of the Constitutional Society was formed, and the Vice-Chancellor welcomed the fall of the Bastille. But with the progress of the Revolution new passions were aroused. The houses of supposed Jacobins were attacked; Tom Paine was burned in effigy on Market Hill; and the publicans engaged to watch for all attempts to proselytise on their premises. After the condemnation in 1793 of Frend, a Fellow of Jesus College who had become a Unitarian, for a pamphlet against the war, little more is heard of French sympathies in Cambridge.

Nine out of ten Englishmen who sympathised with the Revolution were outside the Established Church; and the Unitarians, intellectually the strongest of the Nonconformist bodies, were almost unanimously favourable. The famous sermon of Dr Price struck a note at the beginning of the crisis that was echoed in almost every meeting-house in the country. He was quickly joined by Priestley, who took up the gage of battle thrown down by Burke, and was made a French citizen. On the occasion of a dinner held in 1791 to commemorate the fall of the Bastille, a Birmingham mob marched out to Priestley's house and destroyed his library, manuscripts, and scientific apparatus. Feeling that England was no place for him, he sailed to America. After his departure, the most distinguished Unitarian champion of French ideas was Gilbert Wakefield, the classical scholar, who had left the English Church. In 1794, in his *Spirit of Christianity compared with the Spirit of the Times*, he warned both sides that little could be hoped from violence; and in 1798 he was imprisoned for a vigorous denunciation of the war policy of the government. The greatest preacher in the Free Churches and the leading Baptist of his time, Robert Hall, had declared the Revolution the most splendid event in history. In 1793, in a passionate attack on Bishop Horsley, he defended the liberty of the press, denounced electoral abuses, and spoke admiringly of the United States. Not till the rise of Napoleon did Hall become a supporter of the war, though without retracting any of his earlier opinions. Indeed, with the exception of Dr Sayers, of Norwich, recantations appear to have been unknown among the Nonconformists.

The Revolution was followed with sympathetic interest by several groups of cultivated men, chiefly Nonconformists, in the provinces. The most interesting of these circles was at Norwich, the intellectual life of which centred round the Unitarian Chapel. Among leading figures were Dr Aikin, the brother of Mrs Barbauld and the founder of the *Monthly Review*; John Taylor, the hymn-writer; his wife, who was compared to Madame Roland and Lucy Hutchinson; William Taylor, the first English student of German literature; Dr Alderson and his gifted daughter Amelia, afterwards Mrs Opie; the Martineaus, soon to become

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famous through two of their children; and finally the great Quaker family of the Gurneys of Earlham. A second group was to be found in the neighbourhood of Birmingham, the nucleus of which was the celebrated "Lunar Society," formed by the Lichfield friends, Lovell Edgeworth, Day, and Erasmus Darwin, and joined by Wedgwood, Boulton, Watt, Priestley, Parr, and others interested in science and philosophy. The Liverpool group contained two important figures. Dr Currie, already prominent as an opponent of the Slave Trade, read Burke's *Reflections* with sorrow and indignation; and on the outbreak of war he published one of the most powerful pamphlets of the time. So highly was his judgment valued that he was invited by Wilberforce to report on the effect of the war on trade, with a view to approaching Pitt. There is no better representative of the opponents of the war and of Pitt's system of repression than Dr Currie, a strong monarchist, a supporter of Pitt till the Revolution, a wealthy and cultivated man and an active philanthropist. By his side stood William Roscoe, the historian of the Renaissance, a wealthy lawyer and a strong abolitionist.

The opinion of the capital was divided. While the Common Council supported Pitt's policy at home and abroad, the Livery strongly opposed the war and demanded the dismissal of Ministers. The success of the Corresponding Society, the enthusiasm with which the result of the trials of 1794 was greeted, and the magnitude of the open-air demonstrations in favour of parliamentary reform, indicate the presence of a strong democratic feeling among large numbers of the artisan classes. A group of advanced thinkers, including Godwin and Paine, Aikin and Priestley, Tooke and Gilbert Wakefield, gathered round Joseph Johnson the publisher. The life and soul of the circle was Fuseli, the art critic, who had left Switzerland as a young man; but the most interesting figure was Mary Wolstonecraft, whom Johnson had persuaded to devote herself entirely to literature. Her answer to Burke had made her known, and her *Vindication of the Rights of Women* made her famous. She boldly declared sex to be a secondary consideration, and demanded that men and women should meet on the ground of their common humanity.

When the Revolution broke out Cowper was the leading figure in English literature. He had foretold the fall of the Bastille some years before it occurred, and had expressed his love of liberty in many powerful passages. The sovereignty of the people appeared to him indisputable and the anti-revolutionary alliance a mistake. But his gentle, feminine nature shrank from every kind of violence. He was ageing; and the Revolution spoke everywhere through younger voices.

It was not till his visit to France in 1791 that Wordsworth became really interested in the Revolution. When he met the French officer, Michael Beaupuy, he realised quite suddenly that the hopes that were stirring in men's minds were also his own innermost feelings. On reaching Paris shortly after the September massacres he thirsted to throw himself

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into the vortex ; and on his return to England he defended the execution of the King and declared a republic to be the best form of government. The tragedy of *The Borderers* marks his emancipation from the sway of Godwin and the revolutionary school ; and the profound dejection into which he had been plunged by the horrors of the Revolution gave place to an interest in the teaching of nature, a sympathy with the joys and sorrows of individual men and women, and a belief in an overruling Providence. The process has been described by the poet himself in imperishable verse in *The Prelude*. Though the revolutionary influence was profoundly modified by deeper reflexion and by intercourse with Coleridge and other friends, those fiery years left their imprint. When Napoleon entered on his crusade against the liberties of Europe the voice of Wordsworth was raised in sonnets which express in a final form the principles, purged from their baser elements, which he had learned from France and by which he now condemned her.

When the Revolution broke out Southey was at Westminster School, where he read Rousseau and Gibbon ; and when he went to Oxford in 1792 he was already a freethinker and a republican. At the age of twenty his ideals and animosities found vent in *Wat Tyler*, a play in which John Ball delivers sermons derived from Godwin, and in *Joan of Arc*, in which the English invader is denounced in correct republican phraseology. In the summer of 1794 Southey and Coleridge met at Oxford. Both felt deeply the fall of the Girondins, and both hated their Jacobin successors. They were disenchanted with the old world and without definite prospects. Why should they not settle in the new world and lead a life in common according to nature? Coleridge's glowing words found a ready echo, and the two young men went their way to make converts to Pantisocracy. Volunteers were enrolled for the Susquehanna colony ; but though little money was needed for the scheme, that little was not forthcoming. The dream was rudely interrupted, and in 1795 Southey went to Spain. In the volumes of minor poems issued in 1797 and 1799 we meet with numerous victims of an unjust social order, homage to Rousseau and Mary Wolstonecraft, Falkland and Hampden, keen sympathy with suffering and burning hatred of oppression ; but by the close of the century Southey had completely discarded his democratic opinions, though retaining throughout life a ready sympathy for any plan of direct social amelioration.

When Coleridge entered Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1792, he fell under the influence of Frend. In 1794 he co-operated with Southey in *The Fall of Robespierre*, in which he forcibly expressed his attachment to Revolution principles and his abhorrence of the fallen tyrant. When the Susquehanna scheme was given up, he explained his ideas in lectures to Bristol audiences and in sonnets and newspaper articles. He retained his French sympathies till 1797, when he proclaimed the change in the magnificent ode entitled *Recantation*. The *Fears in Solitude* marks his

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realisation that England belongs to him not less than to Pitt. The Revolution had appealed to Coleridge largely through his love of speculation, whereas Southey had welcomed it as a revolt against injustice. Coleridge, alone of the three friends, was by nature a thinker with an innate passion for first principles. The *Essays on his Own Times* asserted that every institution had an underlying idea, and that the duty of the thinker and the statesman was to reinterpret it and to free it from accretions. His firm belief in Divine government, expressed in the *Religious Musings*, further separated him from the extreme revolutionary school. The reaction was in consequence less violent than in the case of his friends. Many years later he declared that, though he had never been a Jacobin, there was much good in Jacobinism, and that the errors of the opposite party were equally gross and far less excusable. One fault only would he confess; he had hoped too boldly of our common nature.

No Englishman was more fitted by temperament to enter into certain moods of the Revolution than Landor. While still at Rugby he had conceived the dislike of monarchy which he retained throughout life. His first considerable poem, *Gebir*, published in 1798, was a political sermon in verse. All champions of liberty were to him flawless heroes, and kings in most cases were tyrants, fit only to be assassinated. His political creed was more a matter of temperament than reflexion. Like Alfieri, whom he in some ways resembled, Landor was a republican without being a democrat. To the French people he came to entertain a deep aversion. They had, he declared in 1802, ruined the cause of liberty for ever, and in Bonaparte they possessed the tyrant they deserved. On the other leading poets of the time the impression of the Revolution was but slight. Crabbe had greeted the dawn and was frightened by the shadows. Rogers hurried over to Paris to study events and retained the opinions he had imbibed from Priestley and Price; but there is no echo of the Revolution in his poems. Blake, lost in a world of dreams, touches politics only by an appearance in Court owing to an unguarded expression. Numberless odes were evoked by the Revolution from writers of lesser calibre, such as Merry, Roscoe, James Montgomery, Anna Seward, and Miss Barbauld; but of such writings the *Needy Knifegrinder* and a few other poems of the *Anti-Jacobin* alone survive. The novel was chosen by more than one writer as a vehicle for propaganda. The literary vices of Godwin's striking romance *Caleb Williams* were reproduced in the stories of Holcroft, Bage, and Mary Wolstonecraft, without its redeeming power. The influence of the Revolution on writers of the second generation, Byron, Shelley, Moore, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, cannot be discussed here.

There were two thinkers who took no great part in the literary controversy provoked by the Revolution who nevertheless were in different degrees influenced by it. Godwin's *Political Justice* was the direct

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outcome of the philosophic movement in France, and indeed, in its deification of pure intellect, is rather French than English. Since men, apparently with the exception of kings and priests, possessed no innate tendency to evil, their vices must be due to outside agencies. The chief of these baneful influences was government; and improvement was to be sought in removing the control of man over man. The transition from the actual to the ideal must not be accomplished by force; and so averse was Godwin to coercion that he disapproved of the storming of the Bastille. A National Assembly or a President was as dangerous to the liberty of the individual as a King. Private property was no less contrary to political justice than Church property, since a loaf of bread belonged to him who most needed it. Punishment implied guilt; but man's will was not free. What the laws called crime was a miscalculation of consequences due to ignorance, and must therefore be met, not by punishment, but by argument and education. Religion was a fettering of the free use of the reason. Marriage was an affair of property and the worst of all properties. Co-operation is almost as distasteful to Godwin as coercion, involving as it does the sacrifice of complete freedom of judgment and action. In his second edition, published in 1796, he somewhat modified his communistic views; and, after the death of his wife, he confessed that he had underestimated feeling as a factor in society; but his hatred of every kind of restriction on individual liberty never changed. As education spread, government would become superfluous. Like Condorcet and his friend Holcroft, Godwin believed that the secret of perpetual life might be learned, and that as sensual gratifications lost their power children would cease to be born. There would be plain living and high thinking. Every man would seek with ineffable ardour the good of all.

Though Godwin was not an actor, he was an influence on actors. His confidence in the power of reason to guide the individual aright and to reform society made him the idol of young men. Pitt's determination not to prosecute the author of a work which cost three guineas revealed his conviction that Godwin would never reach the multitude. His influence was on individuals — a passing influence on Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Tom Wedgwood, Crabb Robinson, a permanent influence on Shelley. On the other hand Godwin was informed by Parr, Mackintosh, and a host of other critics, that his system was foolish and immoral; and Malthus told him that it was impossible. The elder Malthus was a disciple and friend of Rousseau; and the publication of Godwin's *Enquirer* in 1797 led to discussions between father and son. The younger Malthus foresaw a fatal obstacle to the dreams of his father and of Godwin in the growth of an excessive population. The *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) postulates only the necessity of food and the permanence of the marriage instinct. It was a natural law that population multiplied up to the limit of food. Numbers involved a

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struggle for existence; and a struggle for existence involved inequality. Instead of children ceasing to be born, as Godwin suggested, there would be more than ever, since they would be supported by the community. The State would break down, not from the vices of human character, but from the laws of nature.

Godwin's views on property were shared by two thinkers. In a remarkable tract, entitled *The End of Oppression*, Thomas Spence expressed his amazement that Paine and the democrats should have overlooked the source of every abuse. A committee in every parish should seize the land in the vicinity, burn the title-deeds, and administer it for the good of all. The tract met with so much hostile criticism from the reformers that Spence issued an ironical recantation. The only other socialist of the time was Oswald, a Scotchman.

The second eminent thinker who took no direct share in political life was Bentham. His name was already well known in France when the Revolution occurred, and he was personally acquainted with a number of French thinkers. He drew up a treatise on procedure for the Assembly, and earned French citizenship by his offer to erect a model prison. In his tract, *Truth v. Ashurst*, written in 1792, he congratulated the French on their simplification of the law, and declared that whatever harm they had done to one another they had done none to England. But he was by no means favourable to the principles of the Revolution. His *Anarchical Fallacies* is a merciless criticism of the French Declaration of Rights. Abstract rights were a contradiction in terms; for rights, which are claims to liberty, no less than laws, which are infringements of liberty, must be defended by a reference to utility. Liberty, for example, was dependent on capacity, since many persons needed protection owing to weakness, ignorance, or imprudence. Inequality, again, was to be condemned, not as an injustice, but as tending to diminish happiness. The first requisite of happiness was security; and if the claims of equality conflicted with it they must be sacrificed. On the other hand, Bentham was in many ways a child of the revolutionary age. History had no authority for him, and he was as ready to construct a new legal system as the French to improvise a new State. In later years, finding the path to legal reform blocked by existing institutions, he advocated a republic, and came to accept the Rights of Man as desirable in practice if wrong in theory.

The intellectual activity of Scotland found an outlet in almost every direction except politics. The mental horizon had been widened by the lectures and writings of Hume and Adam Smith, Reid and Lord Kames, Ferguson and Ogilvie, and even by the extravagances of Lord Monboddo. The Universities were the centre of thought, and their atmosphere was distinctly more liberal than that of Oxford or Cambridge. Professor Millar's course on law and politics drew large audiences at Glasgow, and

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the lectures of Dugald Stewart at Edinburgh were compared by one of his distinguished pupils to the opening of the heavens. The French Revolution rapidly divided society into two camps. It was welcomed by the Whigs and in the Universities. The veteran historian Robertson gave thanks that he had lived to see the dawn of freedom; and Dugald Stewart, who had visited France a few months before the outbreak, threw his influence on the same side. Sympathy, however, was almost confined to academic circles and the lower middle classes. The nobility, with the exception of Lord Lauderdale, were stout supporters of Pitt and Dundas; and the lawyers, whose business was to deal with the intricacies of feudal land law, were resolutely hostile to French ideas. The movement for parliamentary reform which had enjoyed the countenance of Dundas was abruptly terminated. The panic grew, and Dugald Stewart described the infatuation of the country as beyond belief. The leading sympathisers with French ideas carefully avoided any action tending to increase the alarm. Archibald Fletcher, the founder of the movement for burgh reform, and Henry Erskine, the most eminent of Whig advocates, refused to join the "Friends of the People," though in sympathy with their proposals.

Left without leaders, the working-classes began to assert themselves. In 1792 the celebration of the King's birthday was marked by riots, and Dundas was burnt in effigy. Shortly after, Thomas Muir, a rising advocate, founded a society of reformers, the members of which had solemnly to affirm allegiance to the government by King, Lords, and Commons. In 1793 he was arrested on a charge of exciting disaffection and sentenced to transportation for fourteen years. For promoting a similar society in Dundee, Palmer, an Anglican clergyman, was sentenced to seven years' transportation. Despite these crushing sentences a Convention met in Edinburgh in November, and was attended by delegates from about fifty Scotch and English societies for parliamentary reform. The discussion opened with prayer; visitors were admitted; and a daily bulletin was issued. At the fifteenth sitting the meeting was broken up by the government. Margarot and Gerald, the delegates of the Corresponding Society, and Skirving, the Secretary of the Convention, were selected for punishment. Their trial was chiefly notable for the brutal conduct of Braxfield, the Scottish Jeffreys. Though the Scottish law of treason differed from the English, Lord Cockburn has pointed out many illegalities in the proceedings. The prisoners were sentenced to fourteen years' transportation to Botany Bay. Not one of them had countenanced force; and when Watt, a spy, had urged them to employ it, he had received the reply, "Mr. Watt, these things do not belong to the cause of reform." In the following year Henry Erskine, the brother of the great advocate, was deposed from his position as Dean of Faculty for denouncing the war. The opposition was silenced: but it was at this moment that Jeffrey, Brougham, Horner, and other

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young men, who were opposed to the war and the Dundas *régime*, began to discuss the ideas which were to take shape in the *Edinburgh Review*.

The only political writings produced in Scotland by the Revolution were the anti-Jacobin tirades of Playfair and Robison and the vagaries of Oswald; but in literature certain French ideas found an eminent representative. In the uprising of the common people Burns saw the reflexion of his own passionate hatred of social inequality. He presented the guns of a smuggler with a letter of congratulation to the French Assembly in 1792. On one occasion he chose as a toast "the last verse of the last chapter of the last book of Kings"; on another he refused to stand or uncover when "God save the King" was played. The philosophical and abstract side of the Revolution left him untouched. It was the struggle for equality based on the conception of a common manhood that stirred his enthusiasm and drew music from his lyre.

The Revolution was hailed with far more general satisfaction in Ireland than in Scotland. The establishment of Grattan's Parliament had quickened the sense of Irish nationality, and the close historical relationship with France led to an eager interest in her fortunes. Lord Robert Stewart, later Lord Castlereagh, joined in toasts to the sovereignty of the people and the conquerors of the Bastille. Charlemont hailed the Revolution as a wonderful and glorious change; and, though disgusted by the later excesses, felt sure that despotism would never return, and that the final outcome would be freedom tempered by law. The Volunteers, whose organisation had not entirely broken up, congratulated France on her achievement. Catholics and Presbyterians naturally joined in approving a revolution which had secured religious equality and parliamentary reform. To accomplish these objects, by combining into one party all who desired them, Wolfe Tone created the society of "United Irishmen" in 1791. In its origin the greater number of United Irishmen did not look beyond the ostensible objects of the association; but Tone and others among the founders soon conceived the idea of establishing an independent Irish republic. In 1792 Grattan founded the society of the "Friends of the Constitution" to carry out the ideas to which the Whig Club would not pledge itself, while resolutely opposing republican propaganda. But the time was unfavourable for a middle party, and Ireland was rapidly divided between the foes of reform and the friends of France. Though the founders of the United Irish movement were nearly all Protestants, the unbending attitude of the government drove many middle-class Catholics into the Society, and the peasantry were gradually won over by the influence of "Defenderism." The outbreak of war in 1793 gave an immense impetus to violent counsels. Lord Edward Fitzgerald was dismissed from the army for attending a dinner given by the English colony in Paris to celebrate

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French victories, and began to urge the despatch of a French expedition to Ireland. Tone, Napper Tandy, O'Connor, and others, journeyed to Paris and informed the French government that the country was only awaiting the landing of troops in order to rise. An expedition under Hoche reached Bantry Bay in the winter of 1796, but was dispersed and forced to return by a storm. From this time the danger diminished. The aggressions of the Directory convinced many that the French would arrive as liberators and remain as conquerors; and the Orange movement began to detach many Presbyterians. When Humbert landed in 1798 there was little likelihood of success; and the scoffs of the French troops scandalised their Catholic supporters. The invasion was repelled; the rebellion was suppressed; and the leaders of the United Irishmen committed suicide or were executed.

The Revolutionary decade produced little genuine political thinking in Ireland. McKenna, one of the most capable Catholic writers, appealed to his fellow-Catholics not to weaken the Crown nor seek an impossible equality; and Alexander Knox, the ablest of the Protestants, submitted the conception of popular sovereignty to a searching analysis in his *Thoughts on the Will of the People*. But the most remarkable work of this era of Irish life was not a discussion of the French Revolution, but the autobiography of Wolfe Tone.

Though Germany was almost completely unknown to France at the outbreak of the Revolution, French manners, French literature, and French ideas were more familiar to Germany than to any other part of Europe. In no country had Rousseau's educational theories found disciples so earnest as Basedow and Campe. The *Aufklärung*, under the guidance of Wolff and Lessing, and even in its later and narrower form under Nicolai, had weakened respect for all beliefs and institutions, and had taught men to rely on their own reason. In distant Königsberg Kant was pointing out the limits of pure reason. In every department save political thinking Germany had witnessed an immense advance. On the other hand certain influences prepared the way for the reception of the ideas of the Revolution. The traffic in human flesh carried on by the Elector of Hesse drew all eyes to the struggle in North America; and the establishment of the Republic was for many Germans the beginning of a recovery from political paralysis. A second influence was journalism. For twenty years before the Revolution the powerful voice of Schlözer, "the Rhadamanthus of Göttingen," had been raised in protest against the abuses that disgraced the greater number of German States. In Swabia a somewhat similar critical and educative work was carried on by Schubart, though on more democratic lines. In the third place, the Masonic movement had challenged traditional ideas. The suppression of the *Illuminati* in Bavaria in 1784 had dispersed them all over the Empire; and Weishaupt and Knigge taught that kings were

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no longer needed and that nobility was but the tool of despotism. A fourth influence was the *Sturm und Drang* movement in literature. Schiller had grown up an enthusiastic admirer of Rousseau, and in his early dramas, *Die Räuber*, *Kabale und Liebe*, and *Fiesco*, he had sung the glories of social and political revolt. Goethe's *Götz* emphasised similar virtues, and Richter and other young writers poured ridicule on the nobility. Finally no national feeling opposed the entry of foreign ideas. Lessing had avowed himself a cosmopolitan, and Goethe and Schiller followed in his footsteps. For these reasons Germany, though unable to initiate a system of political ideas, was peculiarly fitted to receive those which might emanate from another country.

The drama of the Revolution was hailed with delight by the greater number of the leading minds in Germany. Wieland, Schubart, and Schlözer welcomed the news in their journals, the last-named declaring that the angels were surely singing *Te Deums* in heaven. Campe set off with Wilhelm von Humboldt to Paris. "Is it really true," he wrote, "that the Greeks and Romans I see around me were but a few weeks ago French?" Klopstock, the veteran of German literature, regretted that he had not a hundred voices to celebrate the birth of liberty, and declared that if he had sons he would go with them to Paris and demand French citizenship. Bürger and Voss, Richter and Hölderlin, Herder and Stolberg, loudly expressed their joy. In the schools and universities enthusiasm was universal; Hegel and Schelling declaimed revolutionary sentiments at Tübingen; and Georg Kerner (the brother of Justinus) stole away from Stuttgart to Strassburg for the holidays. The kingdom of Prussia had been in the full tide of intellectual reaction since the death of Frederick the Great, and was seething with discontent at the rule of his nephew and the favourites Wöllner and Bischoffswerder. The Francophil traditions of the Great King were carried on by Prince Henry, and outside the Court the reception of the Revolution was favourable. The journals of Archenholtz and Nicolai declared their approval; and in the circle of Henriette Herz and Rahel Levin, in which the intellectual life of Berlin already centred, there was but one opinion. Gentz declared that mankind had awakened from its long sleep, and that the Revolution was the first practical triumph of philosophy. Hertzberg asserted in a public address that it would improve not only the administration of France but her relations with other countries. The weightiest vote in Prussia, that of Immanuel Kant, was cast on the same side. Enthusiasm reached its highest point in the frontier States of the Rhineland, the greater part of which consisted of ecclesiastical principalities.

This mood, however, was not universal. Gleim, Jacobi, the Niebuhrs, and Justus Möser looked on the Revolution with apprehension from the beginning. Stein remained deaf to its appeal, and Kotzebue, who paid a visit to Paris in the first winter of the Revolution, satirised the conflict

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between revolutionary ideals and feminine weakness in his *Ladies' Jacobin Club*. Nor was there praise from the two greatest voices in German literature. Goethe deplored the haste and violence of the Revolution, though his *Grosskophta* shows that he was no friend to the fallen *régime*. As Luther interrupted and in great measure destroyed the work of the Renaissance, so the Revolution interrupted and might destroy the *Aufklärung*. He declared on the evening after the cannonade at Valmy that a new era had begun; but he regarded the future with apprehension. The *Bürgergeneral*, written in 1793, expresses in humorous form Goethe's dislike of propaganda, and his view, repeated in the exquisite idyl of *Hermann und Dorothea*, that the fulfilment of the duty that lies to hand and the formation of a happy home is the better course. In the case of Schiller romantic sansculottism has been banished by his historical studies. France was not educated enough for equality, and liberty must be reached through beauty, through aesthetic culture. Soon after he had received French citizenship as the author of *Die Räuber* the horrors of the Revolution drove him into violent antagonism. He planned an appeal to France for the life of the King; but Louis' head fell before the design was accomplished. The change in Schiller's opinions was typical; and the outbreak of war, the September massacres, and the execution of the King, divided the nation sharply into two classes. Schlözer, Wieland, Scharnhorst, Gagern, Campe, Stolberg, and many others who had welcomed the Revolution declared against it. Klopstock and Herder bore the September massacres, but were converted by the death of the King, though Herder declared that neither side could win laurels in the war. The terror of Jacobinism spread through the land. Seditious writings were seized; and a revolt among Silesian weavers prevented the removal of feudal services in the Prussian Land Code of 1794. The most eloquent, systematic, and untiring opponent of the Revolution, and the most eminent German publicist of his time, was Friedrich Gentz. He had warmly welcomed the events of 1789, but gradually modified his opinions. His translation of Burke's *Reflections*, with notes and appendices, appeared in 1792; and in the following year he issued a powerful reply to Mackintosh. He declared his object to be an attack on the Revolution from its own standpoint. Burke met it with an appeal to prescription and de Maistre with an appeal to religion; but Gentz was as unflinching a political rationalist as any Jacobin, and he condemned it on the ground that France did not correspond with the model State. He never ceased to praise the summoning of the States General; but he considered the destruction of the Estates a mistake, since a monarchy without a nobility was either a nullity or an oriental despotism. Like Mallet du Pan, whom as a thinker he greatly resembles, Gentz found the nearest approach to his ideal in the English constitution.

The Revolution none the less still counted influential supporters.

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Fichte, in his *Correction of Public Judgment on the French Revolution*, accepted Kant's theory of an original contract, not as a historic fact but as the theoretical foundation for a union of intelligent beings. No contract could be final, for the development of moral culture demanded the continual renewal of constitutional forms. The State was not the author of rights, but the mechanism by which they were protected. The philosopher of Königsberg also maintained his opinions. In his essay *On Theory and Practice*, written in 1793, he asserted freedom, equality before the law, and a share in legislation to be fundamental rights. In his essay *On the Strife of the Faculties*, published in 1798, he declared that the misdeeds of the Jacobins were nothing to those of the tyrants of past time, and that the Revolution, though outwardly a failure, would in the long run prove a blessing to mankind. Possessed by an overmastering hatred of war, he saw in the overthrow of the French monarchy the first step towards the federation of republics, which he advocated in his essay *On Perpetual Peace*.

While the greater part of Germany only knew of the doings of the French republicans by report, the inhabitants of the Rhineland made their personal acquaintance. When war broke out in 1792 the Elector of Mainz fled without striking a blow; and, when Custine arrived and declared that he came as a liberator, enthusiasm knew no bounds. A political club was formed, and a Convention was summoned from other parts of the Rhineland. The moving spirit in these proceedings was Georg Forster, who had accompanied Cook round the world. The Convention had scarcely met in April, 1793, when the French were expelled for a short time by the allied troops. On their return they alienated many of their friends; but administrative and legal reforms were introduced, and French influence was deep and lasting. More than one of the Mainz circle fell a victim to the Revolution. Deputed to represent the Convention, Forster settled in Paris, where he died disillusioned in 1794. Adam Lux, who accompanied him, lost hope on the fall of the Girondins, and courted death in defence of Charlotte Corday. A third figure, who played a leading part in the politics of the Rhineland, Eulogius Schneider, left his professorship at Bonn and settled at Strassburg. Excitement turned his head, and he travelled through the surrounding districts with a guillotine, till Saint-Just, in the course of a tour of inspection, sent him to be executed in Paris. The leading figure in the later politics of the Rhineland was Görres of Coblenz. Neither the Terror nor the incorporation of his country with France had dimmed his revolutionary fervour; and in his journal, the *Rothes Blatt*, he eloquently defended French principles. But Brumaire put an end to all hopes. The political clubs were closed and discussion was stifled. Görres returned from a journey to Paris a constitutional monarchist; and his book on his mission marks the close of the most interesting chapter of Rhenish history.

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The invasion of French ideas reached Bavaria later than any other part of Germany. An agent of the Directory reported in 1796 renewed activity on the part of the *Illuminati*; but there was little intellectual activity till the coming of the French in 1800. Their departure was followed by the reforming era of Max Joseph and his Minister Montgelas, both of whom were deeply influenced by the ideas of the Revolution.

In addition to its direct influence, the Revolution must be counted amongst the factors which produced the Romantic School. The reaction against the narrow rationalism, into which under the leadership of Nicolai the movement for intellectual freedom had degenerated, was intensified by the passionate individualism that the revolutionary gale carried over Europe. The Romanticists understood the Revolution as a defiance of tradition and the establishment of human life on a basis of pure feeling. The transition from advanced political ideas to an attack on the moral order, which was feared by so many, actually occurred in the group of lawless young men and women who surrounded Friedrich Schlegel. But speculative and practical anarchy quickly led to the revival of the principle of authority. Count Stolberg entered the Roman Church in 1800, and was followed by several of the leaders of the Romantic school, including, in 1808, Friedrich Schlegel himself. Schleiermacher's *Discourses on Religion* and Fichte's *Vocation of Man* reflected and strengthened the growing seriousness. Savigny called attention to the historical element in law and institutions. The conservative reaction was felt in every department of intellectual activity.

The dominions of the House of Habsburg were intellectually too backward to be much affected by the Revolution; and the reforms of the Emperor Joseph had strengthened instead of weakening the conservatism of his subjects. The diminution of the power of the Crown appeared likely to lead away from rather than towards the only change demanded by the masses, namely the mitigation or abolition of the feudal system. The leader of the attack on French ideas was Alois Hofmann, Professor of Rhetoric at Vienna and a friend of the Emperor Leopold. No newspaper of the time pursued the Revolution with such unrelenting hostility as the *Wiener Zeitung* of which Hofmann was editor. He traced the crisis above all to books. A universal conspiracy was on the point of breaking out, planned by the *Illuminati*; and to combat it the Order of Jesuits should be revived. Though it was dangerous to combat Hofmann, two noteworthy antagonists presented themselves. Revolutions, said the poet Alxinger, never occurred without reason, and would not occur at all if reforms were carried in due time. The Emperor Joseph had freed Austria from such a danger. He knew of no Jacobinism; but if Hofmann succeeded in muzzling the Press, the continuance of order could not be guaranteed. Alxinger was supported by Sonnenfels, the illustrious colleague of Joseph's reforming work. In

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a pamphlet published in 1793 and in his Rectorial address to the University in 1794 he pointed out the benefits of the Revolution. Hofmann replied at length; but his work was taken up by Thugut and political discussion came to an end.

Bohemia was but slightly stirred by the Revolution; but Hungary was more affected than any part of the Habsburg dominions. The county assemblies, which had never lost the traditions of self-government, caught the inspiration of Paris; but instead of affirming abstract principles, the orators demanded the revival of their ancestral liberties. The democratic party, small but active, found its strength in the towns and carried on propaganda by anonymous pamphlets. The Diet, convoked by Leopold on his accession, met in 1790, and carried a number of laws emphasising and safeguarding the historic independence of Hungary. The spirit of 1789 was manifest in the abolition of Protestant disabilities and the admission of the burgher class to office. Though the Emperor was anxious to improve the legal position of the peasantry, the nobles were strong enough to defeat all far-reaching proposals. With the death of Leopold in 1792 reform slumbered till it was taken up again by Szechenyi in 1825. The fear of Jacobinism was spreading over Europe, and the reaction triumphed in 1794, when Kaunitz died and Thugut became supreme. The Protestants were denounced as Jacobins, and a new persecution broke out. Harassed by the censorship, the democrats formed secret societies and organised plots. The leader of the extreme party was Martinovics, an ambitious and unscrupulous Slav, whose alert mind had won the notice of Joseph and Leopold. He had been entrusted with several diplomatic missions, one of them to France, from which he had returned a republican. In 1794 Martinovics and his chief colleagues were arrested. The silence of the judges renders it probable that their objects did not include an attack on the established government; but the whole episode is one of the most obscure chapters in Hungarian history. The Court was terrified by events in France, and the leaders were executed in 1795. Several of the democrats committed suicide, and about 50, among them the poet Kazinczy, were imprisoned. Liberal professors were dismissed from Buda, Kant's philosophy was forbidden, dangerous books were burned, and Hungarian Jacobinism abruptly disappeared.

The *Aufklärung* had been represented in Italy by a body of distinguished thinkers. Beccaria had given definite shape to the growing humanitarianism of the age. Verri, the leader of the Milanese reformers, had put forward enlightened views of economics and administration. Filangieri had set forth the ideals of liberty and equality in his eloquent *Science of Legislation*. Mario Pagano, the most eminent of Vico's disciples, and Genovesi, the distinguished economist, had created a liberal atmosphere in the university of Naples. In the department of

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belles-lettres, Parini had satirised the idle life of the nobles, Casti had ridiculed the courts of Europe, and Alfieri had denounced monarchy and tyranny. Moreover, though the enlightened despots, whether rulers, such as Charles III in Naples and Leopold in Tuscany, or Ministers, such as Tanucci and du Tillot, Caracciolo and Firmian, had broken down many hoary abuses, the governments were not strong enough in the respect of their subjects or the character of the rulers to offer resistance to the inrush of French ideas. Ferdinand of Naples was completely dominated by his Austrian wife and his Prime Minister, Acton, and his kingdom was in confusion. The internal condition of the Papal States had long been unsatisfactory, and had not been improved by the reigning Pope, Pius VI. Tuscany was the best governed country in Italy if not in Europe; but the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty had had no time to take root. The Republics of Venice, Genoa, and Lucca were weak and corrupt. Lombardy was an Austrian province, and Parma and Modena were appanages.

The early stages of the Revolution were welcomed by the leading minds of Italy. Leopold I of Tuscany declared that the regeneration of France would influence every government in Europe and put an end to numberless injustices. His Minister, Manfredini, was in thorough sympathy with French ideas. Count Gorani, who had seen more of Europe than any other Italian, went straight to Paris and was enrolled as a citizen. Verri believed that he saw an arch of light reaching from Paris to Italy. Alfieri, Parini, and Pindemonte celebrated the events in verse. The Italian States were spared the horrors of revolution; for Italy already possessed much that France had to demand. Feudalism had never taken deep root, and except in Naples and Sicily had almost disappeared. Nor did the nobility occupy the same position as in some other countries. For these reasons it was reform and not revolution that was desired. As the sky darkened, the dominant sentiment in Italy was of abhorrence and terror. The lower classes had never been deeply stirred, and manuscript sonnets in detestation of "French liberty" circulated from hand to hand. Extreme opinions were found chiefly among the journalists, students, and artists. At Naples, Palermo, and Bologna, young nobles were imprisoned or executed; but their deaths aroused little sympathy. The murder of de Basseville, the French agent, in the streets of Rome in January, 1793, expressed in the language of the mob the disappointment generally felt at the course of the Revolution. To this feeling utterance was given by the two most distinguished living Italian poets. In his *Bassvilliana*, Monti, borrowing the machinery of the *Divina Commedia*, depicted the soul of his friend, the murdered diplomat, cleansed from the revolutionary taint, looking down on the scenes in which he had borne a part as a penance before entering Paradise. Though Monti regulated his opinions by the changing fortunes of the combatants, the splendid diction and imagery of his epic make it one of

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the most striking literary products of the revolutionary era. The Revolution was combated with greater power by Alfieri. The great dramatist had lived for years in the society of Greeks and Romans, and had breathed the atmosphere of their haughty republicanism. Though he had approved tyrannicide in his work *Della Tirannide*, he despised democracy; and, after being surprised into an ode of congratulation by the fall of the Bastille, he entered on a crusade which terminated only with his life. He had never admired France; and the confiscation of his property after his flight from Paris in August, 1792, raised his indignation to fever heat. His *Autobiography* records in prose and the *Misogallo* in verse his reflexions on the Revolution in France and Italy. The hostility of Italians was increased by the truculence and rapacity of the French armies. The appearance of Bonaparte in 1796 was hailed with enthusiasm in Lombardy; and Verri, Melzi, Parini, and other reformers, offered their support. The astonishing progress of the French arms and the creation of republics by Bonaparte appear to have dazzled the imagination of the masses; for in 1797 an extraordinary wave of enthusiasm passed over the country. Monti wrote a palinode for the *Bassvilliana*. Trees of liberty sprang up in the piazzas, and tricolour cockades filled the streets. The unreality of the world in which men were living was shown in the foundation of the Roman Republic, when the titles and ceremonies of classical times were revived under the mouths of French guns.

The establishment of the Parthenopean Republic is the last and most interesting chapter in the history of the revolutionary era in Italy. From the beginning Ferdinand and Caroline had shown themselves as hostile to France as they dared, and had harshly repressed the Francophil party led by Ettore Carafa. When Championnet entered Naples in 1799 the Court fled precipitately to Sicily. But the French troops were in danger of being cut off and quickly retired; and the Republic found itself without defenders. Never had a State rulers more high-minded and unpractical than Maria Pagano, Vincenzo Russo, and their colleagues; and no journalist ever worked more earnestly for the instruction of the people than Eleonora Pimentel. But the leaders disagreed among themselves as to the speed with which feudalism should be abolished; and when the army of Cardinal Ruffo arrived the city fell away from its philosophic rulers. Carafa and Caracciolo, Pagano and Eleonora Pimentel were hanged, and the Parthenopean Republic was extinguished in blood. The reaction, heralded by Ruffo in the south and Suvóroff in the north, swept over Italy with irresistible force. A religious fury invaded the populace, and trees of liberty were replaced by crosses. Armed bands were formed and marched singing litanies to the expulsion of the French and Jews, and all enemies of the Faith. The Jacobins disappeared as if by magic.

The reaction was sudden; but in truth it was only the surface of Italian life that had been touched by French ideas. Yet the vision of a

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free and united Italy had taken shape during these tempestuous years. Till now the dream of a few thinkers, the force of events had made it the cry of the people, and the cause had been consecrated by the blood of the Neapolitan martyrs. It was not without significance that the last sonnet of the *Misogallo* should be a noble hymn to the resurrection of Italy.

The House of Savoy, though taking its royal title from Sardinia, derived its principal strength from its hereditary possessions north of the Alps. For fifty years before the Revolution the States stood neutral in the struggles of Europe. The administration had been improved, and the relics of feudalism gradually discarded. There was little political liberty and little political discontent under the patriarchal sway of Victor Amadeus III, a well-intentioned ruler of mediocre ability. As father-in-law of the brothers of Louis XVI, he naturally accepted the *émigré* view of the Revolution, and Turin and Chambéry were rapidly filled with the ancient nobility of France. The inhabitants of the mountain valleys knew little of French ideas; but the conduct of the *émigrés* turned the majority of the town population into warm supporters of the Revolution. The government vacillated; and, when in 1792 it threw in its lot with Austria, French troops overran Savoy and Nice without striking a blow, and were received with enthusiasm. Montesquiou reported that the people were prepared for a revolution on the French model. A "National Assembly of the Allobroges" was summoned to Chambéry; the monarchy was abolished; the Church lands were seized; and the work which had occupied France three years was accomplished in four days. But the French invasion was witnessed with very different feelings in the higher ranks of the State. Count Henri Costa, one of the most distinguished of the senators, had greeted the Revolution with enthusiasm, but he quickly came to share the views of his intimate friend and fellow-senator Joseph de Maistre. Till 1789 de Maistre had been regarded as one of the most liberal of prominent Savoyards; but he foresaw the probability of mob rule and rapidly became a determined opponent of the Revolution. The invasion drove him to Lausanne, where he issued his *Letters of a Savoy Royalist*, in which he contrasted the existing confusion with the calm prosperity of previous years and urged Savoyards to throw off the French yoke and recall their lawful rulers. But while de Maistre was asserting that a restoration would not involve reprisals, the King was busily drawing up a list of names for punishment in the belief that Austrian arms would before long set him again on his throne. In his *Considérations sur la France*, published in 1796, de Maistre addressed himself to a wider audience. Unlike most other anti-revolutionary writers of the time he carefully distinguished between France and the Revolution. France was and would remain the chief of nations and the favourite of Providence. The Revolution was

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the work of God, not of men — a punishment for the impiety that France had permitted herself to adopt. When the sin had been atoned, she would again raise her head; and the monarchy, and with it order and religion, would be restored. The book became the Bible of the *émigrés*, and was read by Bonaparte at the moment that his first victories were turning his thoughts towards the future. But de Maistre had more hope of a restoration in France than in his own country. Called to Turin in 1797, he found Charles Emmanuel discouraged and vacillating, and in 1798 witnessed his abdication and flight to Sardinia.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the Swiss Cantons exhibited every form of government from the most democratic to the most exclusive; but the general tendency had been in the direction of oligarchy, and revolts had been of frequent occurrence. The most celebrated of these contests occurred in 1782 in Geneva (which, though not one of the Cantons, was virtually part of Switzerland) and was notable as the first political experience of Mallet du Pan and other men destined to play a leading rôle in the Revolution. On the other hand a remarkable intellectual revival had taken place. The Helvetic Society, founded by Iselin and Gessner in 1762 and joined by men of all races and Churches, proved a powerful instrument of education, and rendered familiar the idea of national unity, which was strengthened by the songs of Lavater and the Swiss History of Johannes Müller.

The opening scenes of the Revolution were hailed with delight by the Helvetic Society, by the leading men in German and French Switzerland, and by the exiles of Geneva and Bern, who formed the Helvetic Club in Paris. Johannes Müller, who was residing in Mainz, declared the destruction of the Bastille the best event since the fall of Rome. Lavater took his view of the event from his friends the Rolands. Pestalozzi was made a citizen and invited to Paris to help in the reform of education. The arrival of the *émigrés* increased the popular sympathy with the Revolution. The governments, on the other hand, were for the most part hostile. The Federal Diet rejected the demand for the recognition of the Constitution of 1791, protested against the oath imposed on the Swiss regiments in the service of Louis XVI, and broke off relations on the fall of the monarchy. It seemed probable that war would break out in 1792. That the struggle was postponed for six years was due above all to Barthélemy, the French agent. Though firmly attached to the Revolution, he was opposed to propaganda, and still more to intervention. Despite the wishes of Dumouriez he held aloof from Ochs and other democratic leaders, and in 1793 persuaded his government solemnly to recognise the neutrality of Switzerland. The following years witnessed a continuation of the constitutional struggle, and the governments met every demand for reform by repression. The reformers, in consequence, led by Ochs, the tribune of Basel, and La Harpe,

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who had returned from Russia, adopted the idea of overthrowing the oligarchies with French help. The Federal spirit was dead, the Cantons were distrustful of each other, and the democrats were everywhere in active or suppressed revolt. At the end of 1797 the Directory violated Swiss territory, and in a few weeks the country was in flames. The panic-stricken governments resigned or were suppressed. Bern offered defiance to her foreign and domestic foes; but her troops were torn by dissensions and after a few skirmishes the proud and wealthy State capitulated. A highly centralised constitution was drawn up by Ochs on the model of the Directory, privileges were abolished, and feudal burdens were swept away. But the French quickly discredited their work by shameless exploitation. La Harpe was appalled by the conduct of the armies he had summoned, and Lavater and Karl Haller raised their voices against the exactions of the deliverer. Revolts broke out but were suppressed in blood. A few weeks' experience had done more to transform Swiss opinion than Mallet du Pan, the brothers Pictet, and other journalists had accomplished in as many years.

Though Spain and France were as closely connected as family ties and treaties could make them, no two peoples differed more sharply in their intellectual outlook. The reforms of Charlés III and his Ministers had never passed from the laws into the lives of the population, and the power of the Church was unbroken, and almost uncontested. Ignorant, poor, devoted to the dynasty, the Spaniards cared much for their religion and their provincial privileges and little for political liberty or administrative reform. In Spain alone was the Revolution regarded with dislike from the beginning. The news of the fall of the Bastille was received with disgust, for Spanish prestige was felt to rest largely on the *Pacte de Famille*. Florida Blanca, whom Charles IV had continued in power, ordered the officers to abstain from discussing French politics. How little there was to fear from the contagion of French principles was seen in the autumn of 1789 in the meeting of the Cortes, which proved the most servile that had ever met. The Inquisition condemned the works of Necker and other French writers, and foreign newspapers were forbidden. The King was deeply incensed when some of the Powers recognised the Constitution of 1791, and sent aid to the *émigrés*, who gathered in Catalonia. Cabarrus was arrested on a charge of corruption, but really for his democratic and sceptical views. Jovellanos was banished to his home in the distant Asturias. Campomanes was deprived of his position in the Council of Castile. The only newspaper allowed to appear in Madrid rigidly excluded all news from France. Foreigners were forced to swear fidelity to the King of Spain and the Catholic Faith, and to renounce the protection of their consuls. The system of repression was continued by Aranda, who succeeded his political adversary, Florida Blanca, in 1792, and by Godoy, who succeeded Aranda.

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With the execution of Louis XVI, a near relative of their own monarch, the cry for war became uncontrollable. Volunteers proffered their services, money poured in, and an Archbishop offered to raise a regiment of priests for the holy war. Condorcet had appealed to Spain in 1792 in his *Avis aux Espagnols* to adopt some at least of the reforms that had been carried out in France; and the Abbé Marchena, who had fled from the Inquisition, attempted to organise propaganda from the south of France. But their appeals fell on deaf ears. The German traveller Fischer found that the name of Frenchman was used at this time as a term of reproach; and when the gage of battle was flung down by France in the spring of 1793 the rejoicing was universal. The reverses which fell on the Spanish arms during 1793–4 speedily cooled the enthusiasm for the war; and the Peace of Basel restored the waning popularity of Godoy. But the French alliance which followed did no more than the French war to inoculate the people with the principles of the Revolution. French ideas were confined to a handful of men. Llorente secretly prepared his attack on the Inquisition; and the poets Quintana and Melendez read their Locke and Condorcet in private. Olavide, who had been banished by the Inquisition as a Voltairean, was taught by a narrow escape from the guillotine to abjure his heresies; and his work on the *Triumph of the Gospel*, appearing in 1797, obtained an enormous circulation. Not till the discussions at Cadiz in 1812 do we hear the unmistakable echo of the voice of the Revolution.

After the somewhat violent activity of Pombal and the expulsion of the Jesuits Portugal had sunk back into torpor. The throne was occupied by Queen Maria, a weak woman suffering from religious mania. A few of the ideas of the *Aufklärung* had filtered in through the Masonic lodges, and the students at Coimbra read their Voltaire and Raynal; but the intellectual life of the nation was at a low ebb, and the Prince Regent told Beckford that the kingdom belonged to the monks.

In 1789 Portugal was represented in Paris by a Minister who expressed unfeigned pleasure at the opening scenes of the Revolution, and urged the creation of local Parliaments and administrative reform. The Foreign Minister allowed the official Gazette to salute the fall of the Bastille. Copies of the Constitution of 1791 were sold by French booksellers, the Duke de Lafoes held Masonic meetings in his palace, and Correa da Serra, the botanist, circulated democratic literature. But the Queen and the Church were from the beginning greatly alarmed; and the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon ordered the parish priests to warn their flocks against French ideas. Diplomatic relations with France were broken off on the fall of the monarchy; and when Portugal threw in her lot with Spain and England in the summer of 1793 she yielded to no country in anti-revolutionary zeal. The Regent was thoroughly alarmed,

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and found an agent in Manique, the Intendant of Police. The French residents in Lisbon, mostly respectable merchants, were in many cases imprisoned or expelled, the houses of the American Minister and consul were watched, and Portugal lay prostrate at the feet of the terrible Intendant and his spies. The most distinguished Portuguese writer of the age, Bocage, who had returned in 1790 from a prolonged sojourn in the East, was kept under observation from the moment of landing. His views were expressed in a powerful sonnet on despotism; and though he condemned the excesses, and wrote a sympathetic elegy on Marie-Antoinette, his faith in France survived his imprisonment.

By far the most remarkable of European rulers contemporary with the Revolution was Catharine of Russia. In her early years she had studied Plutarch and admired Montesquieu. In 1767 she summoned a Commission to St Petersburg to codify the laws, writing with her own hands the long and powerful *Instruction for the Code*, so liberal as to be forbidden to circulate in France. She desired the abolition of serfdom, but found that Russian opinion was not ripe for it. This period of her life was brought to a close by the revolt of Pugatcheff in 1775. She still spoke and wrote of her republican soul; but her ideas hardened and her conduct became more autocratic. She was the friend of the *philosophes*; but Rousseau was never a favourite, Voltaire cared nothing for political liberty, and Grimm, her most intimate friend in France and her correspondent for twenty years, looked with unconcealed contempt on democratic tendencies. She disapproved of the American Revolution, and spoke contemptuously of constitutional monarchy. The early acts of the States General alarmed her, and the fall of the Bastille made her a violent reactionary. On hearing the news of the October days she foretold the death of the King. The French ambassador Ségur relates in his memoirs that the fall of the Bastille was hailed with delight except at Court, though he adds that the joy was of short duration. His statement is not confirmed by other authorities; and it is probable that the enthusiasm was almost confined to the foreign residents. Russia was a country without a *bourgeoisie*; and the serfs were unaware that a Revolution was going on at the other end of Europe. The nobles spoke French and enjoyed French literature; but they had no taste for ideas that threatened their prerogatives. The young Count Stroganoff, later the Minister of Alexander, was led by his tutor Romme to embrace French ideas and become a member of the Jacobin Club, and the Princes Galitzine watched the storming of the Bastille; but they were exceptions. Karamsin, the eminent historian, paid a long visit to Paris, and described his impressions in letters which became steadily less hopeful. The only influence which had in any way prepared Russia for the reception of French ideas was the Masonic movement, of which Novikoff, the greatest moral and intellectual force in Russia, was the life and soul. The

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Empress had at first looked on it with favour, but in the crisis of the Revolution she turned savagely against it. On the fall of the monarchy the French ambassador was dismissed, Novikoff was imprisoned, the Masonic lodges were closed, and their publications burned. Radistcheff, the author of *A Journey from St Petersburg to Moscow*, a remarkable plea for the immediate abolition of serfdom, was exiled to Siberia for an *Ode to Liberty* attacking the reaction. On the death of Louis, Catharine took to her bed. French residents were ordered to swear hatred to the Revolution and fidelity to Louis XVII and the Catholic religion, on pain of expulsion. The French consul was dismissed, the treaty of commerce was abrogated, French ships were excluded from the harbours, and Russian corn was forbidden to be sold to France. The busts of the *philosophes* were removed from the galleries of the Hermitage. French ties worn by the Russian dandies were forbidden, and Marat's brother, who was living in St Petersburg, was ordered to change his name. The word republic was excised from the pieces played at the theatres. In the letters to Grimm constitutionalists and regicides are involved in indiscriminate condemnation.

In the early months of 1792 the Empress wrote her *Memoir on the French Revolution*. She declared the cause of Louis to be the cause of kings, and asserted that 10,000 men starting from the eastern frontier could reach Paris and restore the power of the monarchy. She promised to send a small force to co-operate with Sweden in a descent on Normandy; but the murder of Gustavus occurred before any step was taken. She had in fact no intention of taking an active part in the war. She pronounced sentence on the Revolution, but left it to others to execute. Her plan was to see Austria and Prussia engage themselves irretrievably in the west and to use the opportunity of seizing what was left of Poland. In her confidential Russian correspondence with her generals and Ministers the French Revolution is scarcely mentioned. Not till there was nothing more of Poland to seize did she determine to send Suvóroff with a large army to the Rhine. A few weeks later she was dead.

The great Empress was succeeded by her son Paul, who inherited the anti-Gallican zeal of his mother without her clear vision and calm judgment. But a rival influence began at this moment to make itself felt. The heir to the throne, Alexander, had been educated by La Harpe, the famous Swiss republican, who had based his instruction on Plutarch and Tacitus, and taught his pupil to see in the French Revolution the application of Greek and Roman maxims. The *émigrés* tried to remove this dangerous influence; but Catharine allowed him to remain till 1795. How great was his influence over the impressionable mind of his pupil is known to us from the graphic memoirs of Adam Czartoryski. The young prince rejoiced in the establishment of the French Republic and the success of French arms, declared republicanism the only reasonable form of government, and detested the policy and atmosphere of his father's

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Court. While the Emperor pursued his mad career his heir was engaged in discussions with Czartoryski, Stroganoff, and a few other young and ardent reformers. Though in later life Alexander fell under other influences his complex character never lost the imprint of the experiences and counsellors of his youth.

A few weeks after the fall of the Bastille Poland set to work to remedy the defects which had brought her so near destruction; and in 1791 the Constitution, which won the praise of Burke and Fox alike, was completed. Its cardinal feature was the strengthening of the executive power; and indeed it approximated more to English than to French models. But the instrument which might have saved Poland was forged too late, and was denounced by Catharine and Frederick William II as the work of Jacobins. The leading Polish patriots were certainly imbued with French ideas. Kollontai, the principal author of the Constitution, distinguished as an educationalist, statesman, and orator, made his house the rendezvous of advanced thinkers, and believed that the reform of the government must be followed by the abolition of serfdom. Kosciusko had read French philosophy and was presented with French citizenship. Potocki, a Polish Girondin, had lived much abroad and had brought back an enthusiasm for the Rights of Man. The early teaching of Adam Czartoryski had been entirely republican. But the direct share of France in Polish affairs was inconsiderable. Her ambassador was dismissed after the fall of the monarchy; and the Court of Stanislas joined that of Catharine in mourning the death of the King. The first act of the national Government of 1794 was to send a mission to the Convention; but France was unable to avert the final catastrophe, and the fortunes of the two races were not closely blended till the Polish Legions, formed out of the remnants of the patriots, took service in the French army.

In the struggle between the Austrian Netherlands and the Emperor Joseph the party of tradition was reinforced by a body of men under the leadership of Francis Vonck, penetrated with democratic ideas and touched with religious scepticism. Hating Austria no less than the followers of van der Noot, they demanded the suppression of privileges and the extension of the franchise. On the collapse of the imperial power they demanded a constitution in which the Third Estate should have double representation. Van der Noot turned savagely against his former allies, the clergy denounced them to the people as disciples of Voltaire, and the Vonckists only escaped death by flight to France, where they agitated for the establishment of a Belgian republic on the French model. Jemappes opened the country to French arms; but the elections that followed showed that the majority were opposed to the introduction of French methods of government, and still more to the idea of union

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with France. When Belgium was conquered a second time in 1795 the French officials reported the people to be willing to accept the rule of France if their religious feelings were not outraged. But with incredible stupidity the French suppressed religious Houses, forbade ecclesiastical dress, and made no effort to conceal their scorn for the religious sentiments of the people. Indifference passed into dislike, and dislike into indignation when the aged Cardinal Franckenberg, Archbishop of Malines, the most honoured figure in the country, was arrested in 1797 and hurried across the frontier. In the following year the peasants refused to fight for an unchristian Republic. The revolt was suppressed, large numbers of priests were banished, and the Consulate had to begin the work of conciliation in a disaffected country. The chief result of the Revolution had been to intensify the attachment of the Belgians to their Church.

Since his restoration by Prussian arms in 1787 the Prince of Orange had shown himself more and more despotic. Most of the leaders of the unsuccessful revolt had taken refuge in France, and among these exiles the Revolution found enthusiastic supporters. Two thousand volunteers came forward to serve with Dumouriez, and Batavian Committees were formed in Antwerp and Paris. The easy conquest of Belgium determined France to invade the Netherlands, and war was declared on the same day as against England. French propaganda was meanwhile carried on actively in the clubs and literary societies in Leyden, Utrecht, and Amsterdam; and, when the invasion took place in 1795, the power of resistance had been undermined. The character of the Revolution had been already modified by Thermidor, and Carnot issued strict orders against exploitation. The army used its victory with moderation, and abuses were prevented by the efforts of Paulus and Schimmelpenninck in Rotterdam and Amsterdam respectively. The Stadholderate and the old constitution of the Estates were abolished and the Rights of Man were officially recognised. Roman Catholics and Jews received full political rights, and the independence of the Batavian Republic was guaranteed by France. The revolution was carried out so quietly, partly because there were no wealthy and idle *noblesse* and no richly endowed and reactionary Church to attack, and partly owing to the moderation of the Dutch leaders. But the most difficult work was yet to be done. A national assembly met in 1796 under the presidency of Paulus; but nearly half the country remained true to the House of Orange, while the adherents of the new order were divided between unitary and federal views. A constitution modelled on the Directory was rejected in 1797, and a series of *coup d'états* was carried out by Daendels. But the Orange party was prevented from gaining adherents by the uncompromising views of the Prince. Not till Schimmelpenninck became Grand Pensionary in 1805, did the country enjoy a respite from internal strife.

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The revolutionary decade was not a period of distinction in Dutch literature. By far the most eminent writer of the time was Bilderdyck, who in a series of odes implored the people to believe that true freedom was only to be found under a good monarch. When the French invasion occurred Bilderdyck refused the oath to the Rights of Man and was banished.

At the outbreak of the Revolution the government of Denmark was one of the best in Europe. The work of Struensee was continued by the Crown Prince Frederick, who took over the reins of power from his imbecile father in 1784, and by his Minister Bernstorff. Serfdom was abolished on the Crown lands, and in 1792 Denmark led the way in forbidding the slave-trade within her dominions. The policy of the Regent was one of strict neutrality; and the reverberation of the Revolution was faint. A few writers were carried away by enthusiasm. Steffens, a brilliant young Norwegian, formed a Jacobin club in Copenhagen; but he never ceased to revere the royal House. The elder Heiberg and Malte-Brun, afterwards famous as a geographer, were banished for attacking the institutions of their country with unmeasured violence in verse and in their journals. The most eminent writer of the time, Jens Baggesen, observed greater moderation. He realised that the Revolution could only be the beginning of emancipation, and he wrote a *Hymn to Freedom, to be sung after God knows how many centuries.* In his noble poem *The Revolution*, written in 1793, he drew a striking picture of the tempest, but declared that it would bring peace and freedom. But the Terror called forth a powerful ode, *To the Furies*, and Baggesen doubted for a moment whether the sun would ever return. The Revolution was also followed with sympathy by a small group of men in Holstein, mostly connected with the University of Kiel. The leading spirits were Ehlers and Cramer, the latter of whom was dismissed from his chair in 1794 and settled in Paris. Rist, the well-known diplomatist, relates in his autobiography that he at first wished to enlist under Brunswick, but that his opinions were changed by the study of pamphlets. In the circle of Carsten Niebuhr, the famous traveller, we meet Thibaut the jurist and other partisans of French ideas, though the host and his son were strongly opposed to them from the beginning.

In no country did French literary models hold such unquestioned sway as in Sweden. But, though his visit to Paris in 1771 had left an ineffaceable impression on his memory, Gustavus strongly condemned the Revolution from the beginning. On hearing of the summons of the States General he declared that the King had thereby lost his throne, and perhaps his life. The courtiers complained that all other topics had been driven from conversation at the royal table. He at once offered the *émigrés* an asylum, and issued orders to exclude any

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ship flying the tricolour from Swedish harbours. The ambassador in Paris, de Stäel, a Mason and a friend of the philosophers, urged his master to recognise the new government. But Gustavus, who had determined to be the leader of an anti-revolutionary crusade, recalled de Stäel and appointed Fersen, whose ideas of the crisis coincided with his own. The murder of the King in 1792 led to a complete change. The Regent, the Duke of Sudermania, was under the influence of Reuterholm, a disciple of Rousseau. The liberty of the press was restored and a *rapprochement* was effected with France. But when the young King attained his majority in 1796, Reuterholm was banished; and the ideas of Gustavus III once more prevailed.

Swedish literature under the leadership of Kellgren was too exclusively concerned with questions of form to occupy itself with weightier problems. The only writer who represented the world-wide conflict of ideas was Thorild, equally distinguished as journalist and poet. For some years he had agitated for an increase of political liberty, and in 1788–9 he had paid a long visit to England and studied its constitution. Deeply imbued with Rousseauism, he advocated the burning of cities as the nurseries of vice, and the formation of small communities scattered through the country districts, the States grouping themselves into a world republic. The Revolution was hailed as the moment for the accomplishment of these changes, a Divine act, the most solemn manifestation of God's power since the Flood.

The Revolution was followed with eager interest in the Balkan peninsula. Greek students from the universities of France, and Greek merchants engaged in the carrying trade to Marseilles, brought back French ideas. As victory followed victory Greek patriots turned their eyes from Russia to France. A revolt was planned by Rhegas, in consultation with the French ambassador at Vienna; but the arrest and execution of the great poet put an end for a time to the idea of a rising. But the seed had been sown; and at a later period Kolokotronis declared that the Revolution had taught him that the time to strike for freedom was at hand.

In addition to the strictly contemporary effects of the Revolution already indicated, its operation is to be traced in the revival of Roman Catholicism. In one respect the Revolution was the culmination of the *Aufklärung*, the principal aim and result of which had been to diminish the power of the Church. The suppression of the Jesuits was a public confession of impotence, and since the Reformation its prestige had never been lower. During the Revolution, de Maistre declared that, though directed against Catholicism and in favour of democracy, its result would be exactly the contrary. The immediate consequence of French propaganda was to give currency to a purely secular view of

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life, and in its ultimate effect it has acted as a powerful solvent of every form of belief; but its intermediate result was that foretold by de Maistre. The Papacy won back its power by suffering. The forcible deportation of the aged Pope, Pius VI, in 1797 may be taken as the beginning of the revival; and the violence of the attack on religion in France and in the countries that she overran strengthened the reaction. The conclusion of the Concordat was merely the recognition of a change that had already occurred. After a period during which no belief and no institution had passed unchallenged, the principle of authority regained its place. The emotional appeal was made in Châteaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*, and the appeal to reason received its classic expression a few years later in de Maistre's work *Du Pape*.

To the Revolution is also due the extension of the principle of equality in new directions. The conception of common citizenship, which was the practical side of the doctrine, made it impossible to maintain the disabilities of the Jews. Their case had been eloquently stated by Lessing and Dohm before 1789; but it is to the Revolution, to Mirabeau and Grégoire, to the march of the French armies, that the Jews look back as the signal for their emancipation. Equally impossible was it to tolerate slavery. While the English abolitionists were largely animated by religious feeling, the men who founded the *Société des Amis des Noirs* approached the problem from the standard of human equality. The Constitutional Assembly chivalrously declared the slaves in French possessions to be citizens of France; and, though the dread of Jacobinism retarded abolition, its ultimate triumph owed much to the world-wide currency of French ideas. In the third place the Revolution marks a turning-point in the history of women. Though the National Assembly refused to receive a petition for female suffrage, the conception of equality could not fail to lead to the demand for equal treatment and equal opportunities for the sexes. Their case was fully stated by Hippel and Mary Wolstonecraft, and supported by Condorcet, Friedrich Schlegel, Bentham, and other thinkers, in whose writings most of the legal and social changes that have been effected were foreshadowed. And finally the principle of equality gave an immense impetus to socialism. The nationalisation of the land appears frequently in the pamphlets of the Revolutionary era; and with the conspiracy of Babeuf socialism ceased to be merely a speculative doctrine and became a political programme. But more important than any direct advocacy was the effect of the sudden changes of ownership and the attack on the idea of the sacredness of property. It is in the socialist movement that the operation of the ideas promulgated by the French Revolution is most clearly traceable at the present time.

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THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

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CHAPTER I

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CHAPTER II

THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE

I. MANUSCRIPTS

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II. CONTEMPORARY AUTHORITIES

Jourdan, A. J. L., Decrusy, F. A. and Isambert. Recueil Général des Anciennes Lois Françaises depuis l'an 420 jusqu'à la Révolution de 1789. 29 vols. Paris. 1821–33.

A great deal of information on the subject of this chapter is also to be found in the Cahiers of 1789, references to which are given in the bibliography to Chapters IV, V, VI and VII.

A complete bibliography of such subjects as the institutions of France in the eighteenth century, the working of government, the structure of society and the character of social life would include all the authorities for the history of France at that time and a very great part of contemporary French literature. Among the more useful works may be noted:

Argenson, M. A. R. de Voyer de Paulmy, Marquis de. Journal et Mémoires. 9 vols. Paris. 1859–67.

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See also the works of contemporary philosophers, economists, historians and men of letters cited in the bibliographies to Chapters I and III.

See also:

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III

(*a*) General

Boiteau d'Ambly, D. A. P. L'état de la France en 1789. Paris. 1861.
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Toqueville, Comte C. A. H. M. Clérel de. L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution. Paris. 1856.

Much information is also to be found in general histories of the reign of Louis XV, to which reference is made in the bibliographies of Vol. VI.

(*b*) Special

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(*See works cited in bibliography of Chapter III*)

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(vi) *Condition of the people*

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(vii) *Public opinion in the eighteenth century*

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CHAPTER III

FINANCE

I

A very full account of the literature of the subject will be found in

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II

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Stourm, R. Les Finances de l'Ancien Régime et de la Révolution. 2 vols. Paris. 1885.
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III

The *Archives Nationales* in Paris contain large quantities of manuscript material for the reconstitution of the figures of receipts and expenses towards the end of the reign of Louis XVI; but the figures are full of pitfalls, and it is probable that little modification remains to be made in the *états* or *comptes rendus*. Viewed from the point of the taxpayer, the gross contributions will no doubt be found to exceed to some extent the figures now generally accepted.

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CHAPTERS IV—VII

THE BREAKDOWN OF GOVERNMENT IN FRANCE AND THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

I. MANUSCRIPTS

Archives Nationales, Paris. *See under Chapter II.*

II. CONTEMPORARY AUTHORITIES

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CHAPTERS VIII, IX, XII, XIII

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, THE NATIONAL CONVENTION, THE TERROR, THERMIDOR, VENDÉMIAIRE

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CHAPTER X

FOREIGN POLICY OF PITT TO 1793

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The authorities for a history of Foreign Policy must be mainly the correspondence between the representatives of a country abroad and the home government which is more or less accessible to students. For the present chapter the correspondence preserved in the English Record Office under the Titles France, Holland, Austria, Prussia and Spain is indispensable; and the letters of D. Hailes, first from France and then from Poland, may be mentioned as of special interest. The correspondence relating to England in the French Foreign Office is also of great value. It is admirably arranged, with carefully written abstracts, and is easily accessible. There is also much of interest in the British Museum, especially the Auckland papers, and the Leeds papers.

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CHAPTERS XI AND XVII

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CHAPTER XV

THE NAVAL WAR

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CHAPTER XVI

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CHAPTER XVIII

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FRANCE AND THE SECOND COALITION

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CHAPTER XXV

EUROPE AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

OF

LEADING EVENTS

1697 Bayle's *Dictionary.*
1734 Voltaire's *Letters on the English.*
1748 Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois.*
1751 Publication of the *Encyclopédie* begins.
1753 Rousseau's *Discourse on the origin of inequality.*
1755 Morelly's *Code de la Nature.*
1758 Quesnay's *Tableau Économique.*
1760 Rousseau's *Contrat Social.*
1764 Stanislas Poniatowski elected King of Poland.
1770 Marriage of Louis with Marie-Antoinette.
1774 Accession of Louis XVI.
Maurepas First Minister.
Turgot Controller-General.
The *Parlements* recalled.
Treaty of Kutschuk Kainardji between Russia and Turkey.
1775 First Partition of Poland.
1776 Opposition of *Parlement* of Paris to Reform. *Lit de justice.*
Declaration of American Independence.
Turgot dismissed.
1777 Necker Finance Minister.
Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga.
1778 Treaty between France and the American Colonies.
1779 Liberation of the royal serfs.
1781 Publication of Necker's *Compte Rendu au Roi.*
Alliance between Russia and Austria against Turkey.
Necker dismissed.
Death of Maurepas.
1783 Preliminaries of peace with England signed.
A Council of Finance set up.
Resignation of Joly de Fleury.
Peace with England concluded.
Calonne Controller-General.
Pitt Prime Minister of Great Britain.
Russia annexes the Crimea.
1784 Treaty of Constantinople.
The *Parlement* demurs to a loan of 125,000,000 *livres.* Registration enforced.

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1784 October. The Dutch fire on an Austrian vessel in the Scheldt.
1785 Necker on *The Administration of the Finances of France.*
July. George III joins the Fürstenbund.
August. Arrest of the Cardinal de Rohan. The diamond necklace.
November. Treaty of Fontainebleau.
1786 Commercial treaty between France and England.
August. Calonne's proposals for reform.
" 17. Death of Frederick the Great. Accession of Frederick William II.
December. The Notables summoned.
1787 Joseph II's edicts for the government of the Netherlands.
February 13. Death of Vergennes.
" 22. The Notables meet.
May. Meeting of Catharine II and Joseph II in the Crimea.
" 1. Loménie de Brienne chief of the Council of Finance.
" 25. The Notables dissolved.
Loménie's edicts. The *Parlement* opposes the stamp tax.
June. Princess Wilhelmina arrested in Holland.
August 6. *Lit de justice.* The *Parlement* goes into exile.
" 15. Turkey declares war on Russia.
September 13. The Prussians invade Gelderland.
" 24. The *Parlement* returns to Paris.
October. William V restored to power.
" 27. Treaty of Paris.
November. Loménie proposes fresh loans. Royal Session.
1788 April 15. Alliance between England and Holland.
May. Arrest of d'Espréménil and Goislard. *Lit de justice* at Versailles.
New *Cour Plénière.*
June 13. Provisional treaty of Loo. The Triple Alliance.
July. Meeting at Vizille.
Gustavus III invades Finland.
August. States General summoned.
" 25. Loménie gives place to Necker.
September. Assembly at Romans.
October 6. Meeting of the Four Years' Diet in Poland.
November. The Notables reassemble.
December. Double representation of the Third Estate decreed.
Scarcity and bread riots begin.
" 17. Capture of Oczakoff.
1789 January 24. Definitive summons of the States General.
May 4. The States General meet at Versailles.
June. British vessels seized in Nootka Sound.
" 17. The Third Estate adopts the style of National Assembly.
" 18. The liberties of Brabant cancelled.
" 20. Oath of the Tennis-court.
" 23. The Royal Session. The King's declarations.
" 27. Union of the three Estates.
July 6. The first Committee of the Constitution appointed.
" 11. Necker ordered to quit the kingdom.
" 14. Fall of the Bastille.
Necker recalled. First emigration. Bailly Mayor.
Formation of National Guards. Risings in the Provinces.
August 4–5. Resolutions against feudal abuses and serfdom.
October 1. The banquet at Versailles.
Rebellion in the Austrian Netherlands.
" 5. March to Versailles.
" 6. The King and the Assembly removed to Paris.
" 9. The Austrians take Belgrade.
November 2. The possessions of the Church nationalised.

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1789 December 21. Assignats issued.
1790 January 30. Alliance of Prussia with the Porte.
February. Spain and England at issue as to Nootka Sound.
" 20. Death of Joseph II. Accession of Leopold II.
March 29. Defensive alliance between Poland and Prussia.
June 12. Union of Avignon to France resolved by the citizens of Avignon.
July 12. The Civil Constitution of the clergy decreed.
" 14. First *fête* of the Federation.
" 27. Convention of Reichenbach signed.
August. The federation of Jalès.
Revolt of the regiment of Château-Vieux.
The Civil Constitution of the clergy receives the royal assent.
" 15. Treaty of Werela between Sweden and Russia.
September 4. Resignation of Necker.
" 6. Mutiny at Brest.
October 28. The Nootka Convention.
November. Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution.*
December. Suppression of the Belgian Republic.
" 16. The Polish Diet doubled.
" 26. Louis XVI gives his assent to requiring the clergy to swear fidelity to the Civil constitution.
1791 March. The Russian Armament.
April 4. Death of Mirabeau.
May 3. The new Polish Constitution proclaimed.
June 21. The flight to Varennes.
July 6. The circular of Padua.
" 17. The massacre of the Champ de Mars.
" 25. Alliance between Austria and Prussia.
August 22. Rising of the negroes at San Domingo.
" 27. Declaration of Pilnitz.
" 30. Treaty of Sistova signed.
September 3. The Constitution voted.
" 13. The union of Avignon with France decreed.
" 30. The National Assembly comes to an end.
October 1. The Legislative Assembly begins.
" 8. Lafayette resigns the command of the National Guard.
" 16, 17. Massacres at Avignon.
November 9. Decree against the *émigrés.* Vetoed Nov. 12.
" 14. Pétion Mayor of Paris.
" 29. Decree against the non-juring priests.
December 19. The King vetoes the decree against the priests.
1792 January 9. The Treaty of Jassy.
" 18. Ansbach and Baireuth escheat to Prussia.
February 7. Treaty of Berlin between Austria and Prussia.
" 9. The property of the *émigrés* confiscated.
March 1. Death of the Emperor Leopold.
" 10. The Comte de Narbonne superseded.
Fall of the *Feuillant* Ministry.
" 24. Brissotin Ministry.
" 29. Murder of Gustavus III.
April 15. *Fête* in honour of the Swiss of the regiment of Château-Vieux.
" 20. War declared against Austria.
May 19. The Russian armies invade Poland.
June 10. Petition of the 8000 against the camp of *fédérés.*
" 12. The Brissotins dismissed.
" 20. The mob invades the Tuileries.
" 28. Lafayette at the bar of the Assembly.
July 1. Petition of the 20,000.

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1792 July 11. The country declared in danger.
" 13. Treaty between Austria and Russia.
" 14. Feast of the Federation. Francis II Emperor.
" 25. The Sections begin to sit *en permanence*.
" 27. Manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick.
August 1. The National Guard reorganised.
" 7. Treaty between Russia and Prussia.
" 10. Attack on the Tuileries. Massacre of the Swiss. Louis a prisoner. Elections to the National Convention decreed.
" 20. Flight of Lafayette.
" 23. Fall of Longwy.
" 27. Primary Elections to the Convention begin.
September 2. The Massacres in the prisons. Secondary elections to the Convention. The Allies occupy Verdun.
" 20. The Battle of Valmy.
" 21. The Convention meets.
" 22. The Republic proclaimed.
" 28. Nice occupied. War with Sardinia.
October 14. Retreat of the Prussians.
" 21. Custine occupies Mainz.
November 3. Report of the Committee on charges against Louis.
" 6. Battle of Jemappes.
" 14. Brussels occupied by the French.
" 19. Protection to nations struggling for freedom decreed.
" 27. Savoy incorporated in France.
December 3. The trial of Louis XVI decreed.
" 15. Compulsory liberty decreed.
" 18. Prosecution of Paine's *Rights of Man*.
" 31. Pitt's remonstrance.

1793 January 4. *Comité de Défense Générale* established.
" 13. Basseville murdered in Rome.
" 14. The Prussians enter Poland.
" 19. The immediate death of Louis XVI decreed.
" 21. The King executed.
" 23. Second Partition Treaty.
February 1. War declared by France against England and Holland.
" 23. Decree for the ballot for the army.
March 7. War declared on Spain.
" 8. Dumouriez recalled from Holland.
" 9. *Représentants en mission* sent out.
" 14. Revolt in the Vendée.
" 18. Dumouriez defeated at Neerwinden. The Netherlands evacuated.
" 29. Extraordinary Criminal Tribunal re-established.
April 5. Defection of Dumouriez.
" 6. First Committee of Public Safety.
" 14. The siege of Mainz begins.
May 3. Decree of the *maximum*.
" 18. The Committee of Twelve.
" 31. Insurrection of 12 Prairial.
June 2. Fall of the Gironde.
" 6. Protest of the 73 deputies.
" 17. Diet of Grodno.
July 10. The Great Committee of Public Safety. Decline of Danton's influence. Fall of Condé.
" 13. Assassination of Marat.
" 23. Mainz capitulates, Polish treaty with Russia signed.
" 26. Fall of Valenciennes.
August. All officers of noble birth cashiered.

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1793 August 10. *Levée-en-masse* decreed.
" 28. Hood occupies Toulon.
September 5. Law of Forty *Sous*. The Revolutionary Tribunal divided into four sections.
" 6. Collot d'Herbois and Billaud-Varennes added to the Committee of Public Safety.
" 8. Battle of Hondschoote.
" 17. Law of the Suspect.
" 23–24. Dumb sitting of the Polish Diet at Grodno.
" 25. Prussian demands conceded by Poland.
October 3. The Girondins proscribed. The 73 imprisoned.
" 9. Embargo on English goods.
" 14. Trial of the Queen begins.
" 16. Battle of Wattignies. Execution of Marie-Antoinette.
" 24. Trial of the Girondins.
November. The Terror in Lyons.
" 10. The Feast of Reason.
" 12. Execution of Philippe Égalité.
" 26–28. Battle of Kaiserslautern.
December 12. Defeats of the Vendée insurgents at Le Mans and (Dec. 23) at Savenay.
" 18. Toulon evacuated by the British and the Spaniards.
" 26. Wurmser defeated at Weissenburg.

1794 January 17. Turreau and his *colonnes infernales* against the Vendée.
March 24. The Hebertists executed. Publication of Kosciusko's manifesto.
April 3–5. Trial and execution of Danton.
" 18. Russians evacuate Warsaw.
" 19. Convention of the Hague between England and Prussia.
May. The French occupy the passes leading to Piedmont.
" 18. The English and the Austrians defeated at Lille.
" 21–31. Jourdan crosses the Meuse and threatens Charleroi.
" 23. Treaty of Valenciennes between Austria and Sardinia.
" 28–June 1. Howe in action with Villaret-Joyeuse.
June 6. Battle of Rawka.
" 8. *Fête de l'Être Suprême.*
" 10. Law of 22 Prairial.
" 25. Coburg defeated at Fleurus.
July 27–28. (9–10 Thermidor.) Fall and death of Robespierre. The Commune of Paris abolished.
" 31. The Committee of Public Safety reconstructed.
August 1. Fouquier-Tinville impeached.
" 12, 28. The powers of *Représentants en mission* curtailed.
" 22. Law of Forty *Sous* abolished.
" 23. The Government reorganised.
" 29. Billaud, Barère, Collot, leave the Committee of Public Safety.
September 6. Blockade of Warsaw raised.
October, 1794–January, 1795. Pichegru conquers the Low Countries. Jourdan occupies Cologne, Andernach, Coblenz.
" 10. Battle of Maciejowice.
" 29. Horne Tooke and others acquitted of treason.
November 8. The Russians enter Warsaw.
" 11. The Jacobin Club closed.
" 27. Pérignon occupies Figueras.
December 9. Return of the 73 deputies.
" 16. Carrier sentenced to death.
" 19. Congress at St Petersburg.
" 23. The *maximum* abolished.
" 25. Mannheim occupied.

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1794 December 27. Pichegru invades Holland.
1795 January. Boissy d'Anglas joins the Committee of Public Safety.
" 3. Treaty between the Emperor and Catharine II for the partition or acquisition of Turkey, Venice, Bavaria, and Poland.
" 19. Pichegru in Amsterdam.
February 9. Peace with Tuscany.
" 15. Peace of La Jaunaie.
" 21. Liberty of worship decreed.
March 2. Billaud, Barère, Collot, and Vadier brought to trial.
" 8. The Girondins recalled.
" 21. Constitutional Committee appointed.
April 1. Insurrection of 12 Germinal.
" 5. The Treaty of Basel signed.
" 20. Peace in Britanny.
May–June. The White Terror.
May 7. Fouquier-Tinville executed.
" 16. Holland makes terms with France.
" 20. Insurrection of 1 Prairial.
June 10. Death of the Dauphin (Louis XVII).
" 25. Luxemburg capitulates.
" 27. Landing of *émigrés* at Quiberon.
July 20. The *émigrés* at Quiberon captured.
" 22. Peace concluded with Spain.
August 22–30. Decrees of Fructidor (the two-thirds).
September 6. Jourdan crosses the Rhine.
" 20. Pichegru occupies Mannheim.
October 1. Belgium incorporated with France.
" 3–5. Insurrection of Vendémiaire.
" 24. Revised scheme for the Partition of Poland.
" 25. Law against priests.
" 26. The Convention dissolved.
November 3. The Directory installed.
" 23–4. Battle of Loano.
" 25. Abdication of Stanislas Poniatowski.
December 19. Jourdan concludes an armistice with the Austrians.
" 31. Pichegru signs an armistice with the Austrians at Weissenburg.
1796 February 1. Paris divided into 12 Municipalities.
" 27. Closing of the Panthéon Club.
March 19. Freedom of the press decreed.
" 27. Bonaparte arrives at Nice.
April 11–28. Successes of Bonaparte.
" 28. Armistice of Cherasco.
May 10. The conspiracy of Babeuf suppressed. Battle of Lodi.
" 15. Peace with Sardinia.
June. Moreau and Jourdan cross the Rhine.
July 29. Advance of Wurmser.
" 31. Siege of Mantua raised.
August 2–4. Battles of Castiglione, etc.
" 19. Treaty of San Ildefonso. Spain allied with France. Successes of the Archduke Charles.
September. Retreat of Moreau and Jourdan.
October 5. Spain declares war against England.
" 16. Cispadane Republic founded.
November. British fleet withdrawn from the Mediterranean.
" 15–17. Battle of Arcola.
" 16. Death of Catharine II.
December 16. Hoche sets sail from Brest for Ireland.
" 19. Lord Malmesbury ordered to leave Paris.

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1797 January 14. Battle of Rivoli.
" 26. Final treaty of Polish Partition.
" 30. The conspiracy of Brottier suppressed.
February 2. Surrender of Mantua.
" 14. Battle of Cape St Vincent.
" 19. The Pope makes peace at Tolentino.
April 16. Mutiny of the fleet at Spithead.
" 18. Preliminaries of peace signed at Leoben.
May 1–16. The Venetians adopt a new constitution.
" 2. Mutiny at the Nore.
Admiral Duncan blockades the Texel.
" 20. The newly elected members of the *Corps Législatif* take their seats.
" 27. Barthélemy elected Director in place of Letourneur.
June 6. Provisional treaty with Genoa.
" 28. The French at Corfu.
July 9. The Cisalpine Republic formed and (July 15) united with the Cispadane.
" 16. The Moderate Ministers dismissed.
September 4. *Coup d'état* of 18 Fructidor.
" 5. Law of 19 Fructidor.
" 6. Merlin of Douai and François de Neufchateau elected as Directors.
" 30. Bankruptcy of the two-thirds.
October 11. Battle of Camperdown.
" 17. Peace of Campo Formio.
Bonaparte appointed to command the force intended for the invasion of England.
December 16. Congress at Rastatt opens.
1798 February 15. Roman Republic established.
" 20. Pius VI leaves Rome.
March 5. The French occupy Bern.
" 9. The left bank of the Rhine ceded to France.
" 20. Treaty forced on the Cisalpine Republic.
" 29. Helvetic Republic proclaimed.
May 1. Cobenzl succeeds Thugut.
" 11. Second *coup d'état* to deal with the elections.
" 13. François succeeded by Treilhard as Director.
" 19. Bonaparte sets sail from Toulon.
June. Riot in the British Mediterranean fleet.
" 12. Malta surrenders to the French.
July 2. Alexandria occupied.
" 21. Battle of the Pyramids.
August 1–2. Battle of the Nile.
" 22. Humbert's force lands in Ireland.
September. Russian fleet in the Mediterranean.
" 5. Law of conscription.
October 21. Rebellion at Cairo.
November. English occupy Minorca.
" 29. Ferdinand I of Naples enters Rome.
December 4. France declares war against Naples.
" 9. Charles Emmanuel IV of Sardinia abdicates.
" 21. Ferdinand and his Court take flight from Naples for Palermo.
1799 January 2. Great Britain joins Russo-Turkish alliance.
" 23. The Parthenopean Republic established.
February 20. The French capture El Arish.
March 1. The French cross the Rhine.
" 7. Jaffa occupied.
" 12. Austria declares war on France.

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1799 March 19. Siege of Acre begun.
" 25. Jourdan defeated at Stockach by the Archduke Charles.
April. Bruix in the Mediterranean.
" 28. Murder of French envoys at Rastatt.
May 9. Rewbell retires from the Directory. Sieyès elected.
" 20–1. Siege of Acre raised.
New third of the Legislative Body elected.
June. Suvóroff's campaign in Italy.
" 14. The French army in Cairo.
" 18. Revolution of 30 Prairial.
" 23. Neapolitan rebels surrender to Ruffo.
July 12. Law of Hostages.
" 25. The Turks defeated at Aboukir.
August 13. The Jacobin Club again closed.
" 15. Joubert defeated and killed at Novi.
" 22–3. Bonaparte sets sail from Egypt.
August–October. British force in Holland.
September–October. Suvóroff driven out of Switzerland.
October 9. Bonaparte lands at Fréjus.
Paul recalls Suvóroff and Korsakoff.
November 9. *Coup d'état* of 18 Brumaire.
" 10. The Councils at Saint-Cloud.
December 24. The new Constitution comes into force.
1800 January 24. Treaty of El Arish.
March 20. The Turks defeated at Heliopolis.
June 14. Kléber assassinated.
September 5. Malta surrenders to the English.
1801 August. The French forces in Egypt capitulate.

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